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Rural America Responds to Hunger Overseas
'I Wish the Churches Would Mind Their Own Business'
Drama, New-Old Tool for Christians



Rodney Wead of Omaha's Radio KOWH [see pages 2-7]

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12th World Methodist Conference



Eight Presidents for World Methodism

LAUNCHING a four-year, worldwide evangelism emphasis, the World Methodist Council, meeting in Denver late last summer, elected its first Presidium—eight presidents to replace the former pattern of a single president and 12 vice-presidents. Outgoing president of the WMC, an organization linking 55 churches with some 20 million members in 87 countries, was Dr. Charles C. Parlin, Englewood, N.J.

In addition to election of the eight members of the Presidium, the world body also elected a chairman and a vice-chairman of a 107-member Executive Committee, other officers and Executive Committee members. A larger proportion of Executive Committee members now come from the "third world"—Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Members of the Presidium pictured above include (from left): Bishop Alejandro Ruiz, Mexico City; the Rev. John A. Havea, Nukualofa, Tonga Islands; Dr. Patrocinio S. Ocampo, Manila, Philippines; Ragnar Horn, Oslo, Norway; Bishop Herbert Bell Shaw, Wilmington, N.C.; the Rev. Thomas W. Koomson, Accra, Ghana; Bishop F. Gerald Ensley, Columbus, Ohio; and Phillip N. Capper, Winchester, England.

—H. B. Teeter

Together



On the outskirts of Omaha, Nebr., community leader Rodney Wead stands proudly before the tall antenna of radio KOWH, a black-owned and operated station heard as far away as Sioux City, Iowa, and Lawrence, Kans. The site is Omaha's "Antenna Park" at the city's northwest corner. For more on Rodney Wead and his role in the community, see Jim Campbell's article beginning on page 2.

Together®

FOR UNITED METHODIST FAMILIES

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TOGETHER

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Black Capitalism--Omaha



Rodney Wead (left) and Wilbur Phillips check a recently finished survey of Omaha's black community.

Text by JAMES CAMPBELL / Pictures by GEORGE P. MILLER

Through efforts of a United Methodist-related community center and its executive director, blacks in Omaha are making major progress in developing their own economic enterprises. After 18 months of canvassing, meetings, advertising, and collecting money, blacks now claim proud ownership in a radio station and a credit union and expect to charter a new bank soon.

LIKE SETTLEMENT HOUSES in many cities, the United Methodist Community Center of Omaha has a history of serving low-income Omahans with a passel of programs—sports, games, and outings for the young; cultural and educational classes, counseling, and group discussions for adults.

These are still offered, but a new objective has been added: "To move the black community toward economic development." As a result of the community center's efforts, the city now has a black-owned and operated radio station, an economic development center, a black-owned credit union, and a scholarship program for college youth.

Since 1969 the community center, commonly called Wesley House in Omaha's black community, has succeeded in provoking and stirring people toward tangible economic goals. Main cog behind the center's new thrust is Rodney Wead, its executive director since 1967.

Rodney is a neatly bespectacled, six-foot-five 210-pounder. He has an easy smile and you like him instantly. But he minces no words in telling you why economic development has become a priority for black people:

"The time for pilot programs in the black community is past. They were designed to fail. Many blacks who trained for them found themselves with no job opportunities after the training period was over."

Wesley House now has a whopping \$400,000 annual budget and receives funds from several sources including Omaha's United Community Services Fund as well as major support from the Nebraska Conference of The United Methodist Church.

The church support, of course, is nothing new. Organized about 20 years ago by the Women's Society of Christian Service, the center served whites until its north-side community began to change racially about 10 years ago.

The way was opened for expansion of the Wesley House program in 1969 when Nebraska United Methodists under the leadership of Bishop Noah Moore named a Committee of 50 to consider local needs in the light of the denomination's then-new Fund for Reconciliation. The committee's recommendations for action programs led the annual conference to establish a \$4-per-member goal to support both the Fund for Reconciliation and a second-mile effort which the Nebraskans called their Urban-Rural Crisis Fund. Later they adopted a new name—the Human Concern Fund—for the combination effort, and Wesley House was given \$160,000 to be used "for imaginative, motivating, and enlightening programs."

The money was used to investigate the possibilities for cultural and economic improvement in the black community—seed money, to plant and explore. Rodney's staff (about 10 full-time employees and 15 part-timers now) not only came up with new programs, but ones they believed would make money as well. "Luckily," says Rodney, "we at the center have been able to bring some of these programs into being."

"We never begin anything without mass meetings, block club gatherings, and then forming committees," says Rodney who is a firm believer in getting broad support of the people. For example, out of some \$143,000 raised in the sale of shares for the radio station, Rodney says a large amount came in small sums from blacks who work in Omaha's packing houses and railroad yards.

Purchase of the station from its previous owners was made possible by an additional \$250,000 loan from the Mission Enterprise Loan Investment Committee of United Methodism's Board of Missions and a \$50,000 loan from a local bank. When radio station KOWH, AM and FM, officially began broadcasting on January 1, 1971, it became one of the half dozen such black-owned enterprises in the nation.

The station received major financial backing from four black physicians in the Kansas City area. Whites who bought stock in the station agreed at Rodney's request to become nonvoting members. Local black sports figures Bob Boozer, former professional basketball star, and Bob Gibson, the St. Louis Cardinals' baseball pitcher, were large investors.

Gibson and Wead are longtime close friends. Both are 36 and grew up on Omaha's north side. Gibson has invested portions of his baseball earnings in each project Rodney has brought into being.

Long after the initial \$11,000 seed money for the radio station was gone, the Federal Communications Commission appeared ready to approve transfer of the broadcasting license to KOWH. With no money for traveling to the FCC hearing in Washington, D.C., Rodney telephoned Bob Gibson. "Bob, we need someone to represent us at the FCC hearing. Could you pay your own way and go?" "I guess so," answered Gibson. "By the way," Rodney asked, "could you pay my way, too?" They went together.

After KOWH received the required FCC approval to begin operations, Gibson served as the station manager the first month.

The KOWH studio is on a main west Omaha thoroughfare and its transmitter [see this month's cover] is in an open area outside the city limits. Its nondirectional, clear channel AM broadcasts can be heard as far away as 200 miles. That includes Lincoln, the only other Nebraska city with a sizable black population, as well as Sioux City, Iowa, and St. Joseph, Mo. The station's AM programming is designed, says Alvin J. Gilmore, the youthful station manager, to attract the young. He said the FM station plans to reach an older audience with jazz and middle-of-the-road "soul" music. Basic broadcasting format on both AM and FM is "rhythm and blues" with religious meditations.

The biggest problem, says Manager Gilmore, is convincing businessmen that the station has enough listeners to make their advertising pay. "Buyers base their sales on ratings, and right now we have a low rating because we are so new," he points out.

As chairman of the KOWH board of directors, Rodney Wead is convinced that the goal of garnering 12 percent of the city's major advertising business is feasible.

CONVENIENTLY LOCATED across North 35th Street from Wesley House is an old frame residence which houses the research department for the community center's economic development program, headed by Wilbur Phillips, a 42-year-old, slightly rumpled attorney. Staff members refer to it facetiously as the "think tank." Its walls are all but hidden by development maps of the Omaha communities the staff has surveyed—along with appropriate graffiti: "Black is doing it right the first time" and "Gettin' it together is essential to survival." The staff



As part of the KOWH Junior Achievement program, a young disc jockey learns the correct way to play a recording from an experienced staff member. About 20 youths are involved in the program designed to teach them the skills of radio broadcasting.

also has a 248-page profile of Omaha's black community dividing its residential and commercial sections. Charts show what areas need the most attention.

The center provides consultant services for banks, unions, and small businesses, and information is also available on the types of jobs blacks have and the percentage of blacks holding them. Its census files say blacks total 34,722 among the city's nearly 400,000 residents.

Explaining the program, Attorney Phillips says, "We are talking about creating positive economic products right here. The greatest thing that could happen to this country is minority development. It will help minorities aid the system rather than be a liability."

Three persons, two of whom are full-time, help Phillips keep the center's resources up to date, aided by a \$30,000 annual grant from the United Methodist conference. A major emphasis is on improving housing.

Back at Wesley House, alive with day-care and tutoring programs, are several multipurpose rooms and a gymnasium. One room contains the library and academy of performing arts, begun three years ago with the help of Jewish women. Around the wall hang pictures of famous blacks, past and present, along with pictures of about 38 college students, symbols of future promise, who are currently being aided by the center's Educational Coordinator Scholarship program.

More than 100 college students have benefited from the fund since its beginning in 1969 when the United Methodists agreed to provide a \$25,000 start. Since then the bulk of the money has come from a private Omaha foundation. Most students receive about \$500 yearly. The center proudly points to five college grads who were aided by the fund. At least two others are expected to graduate this year.

Staff member Jesse Payne, in charge of the scholarships, said the program's financial success is the result of Rodney Wead's interest and concern for youth. While the fund has concentrated on black young people, some whites, too, have been helped. One thing Rodney has going for him with young people is his native status. He has lived in Omaha all his life and knows most of the youth who have frequented the center over the years.

Rodney's wife, Angeline, says all six members of their family have lived all their lives within less than two miles of their present home. (That's except for the four years Rodney attended Dana College in Blair, Nebr., where he received a B.S. degree in education and excelled in basketball.) Their four children, three girls and a boy, range from 8 to 17 years.

In addition to her household chores, Mrs. Wead is a full-time business major at the University of Nebraska's Omaha campus. She said her husband is no "briefcase man" but often makes three meetings in one night. Smiling, she says, "Rodney hates to admit he's 36. When he reaches 40, he will think it's a national disaster."

Another brainchild of the community center is the Franklin Community Credit Union located about six blocks away. The credit union was chartered in 1969 and grew out of \$10,000 in investigative money from the United Methodist conference. Its main value, Rodney says, is helping low-income people escape the pitfalls of excessive interest rates from loan sharks and finance companies. The average loan is \$350.

The credit union began with a small capital of less than



Jesse Payne, administrator of the scholarship program (facing camera), confers with one of its recipients on the University of Nebraska's Omaha campus. More than 100 students have benefited from the fund. At the Franklin Community Credit Union (right), a teller waits on two of the 900 or so savers who visit the office weekly.



Community center director Rodney Wead (left foreground) joins a discussion with one of the many human relations groups which use Wesley House facilities. This luncheon group's topic centered on the contributions of blacks in history.

\$8,000 and is now about to reach the \$50,000 asset level. It got its beginning in typical Wead style: mass meetings, block clubs, arousing community interest.

Credit union officials say they expect to be able to pay dividends for the first time in 1972. The credit union got a big boost last year when it was permitted to sell food stamps to welfare recipients. Its future goal is to establish rapport with middle and upper-middle income families.

Some of Rodney's efforts have not exactly gone unnoticed. A good example is the center's drug abuse and draft counseling programs. Both were set up to enlighten and inform the public.

Charles Washington, a public relations consultant active in Omaha community affairs, said the community center director had "made it a thing of getting behind programs, not himself. On the gut issues, Wesley House is always available."

Washington credits Rodney with getting football sensation Johnny Rogers enrolled at the University of Nebraska. Washington also says Rodney is responsible for getting several young people into college simply by persuading their parents to let them go.

A Baptist minister, the Rev. Charles F. Thomas, termed Rodney's contribution to the community "outstanding," adding: "He hasn't had a great deal of support. Most people don't want to join a ship until it is out in the ocean moving. Rodney would have been out of sight had he been a minister, I think."

Others in Omaha will tell you about Wead's tenacity in pursuing his goals even when the odds are against success—like the cold days when he and his followers were out collecting small amounts for a proposed black-owned and operated bank. Their determination has paid off. The bank now is expected to be chartered about the middle of 1972, if not sooner.

Already some \$118,000 has been raised from major stockholders and the balance of \$372,000 to meet a \$500,000 capitalization goal is expected to come in small amounts from blacks who work at the Omaha packing houses, Western Electric, and Union Pacific Railroad. As with the radio station, white stockholders have agreed to accept nonvoting status.

Rodney says the radio station's success has helped contribute to the success of the bank idea. "Seeing what could be done with the radio station, now they know it



A weekly television show on Omaha's NBC outlet provides Rodney with another opportunity to keep the city's black community informed. He uses a varied format including interviews like the one he is conducting here with an Omaha businessman.

can be done with a bank, too," he points out.

An 11-member board of directors has been formed including two white members. The blacks were persons Rodney knew had the interest and the money to back it up. A booklet carefully outlining details about the proposed new bank can be seen in public places in and around the city.

Rodney has established contacts at three large white-owned banks in the city and expects to use one as a correspondent, required by law. The black bank will be located in the northwest section of the black community and will be the only bank in the area.

"That bank will really rebuild our community," Rodney predicts. Economic developer Wilbur Phillips says it is the only way it can be rebuilt: "If we don't do it, it won't get done."

One white member of the bank board is a real-estate broker who heard Rodney speak at an Omaha Rotary Club meeting three years ago and became an acquaintance. He helped organize the credit union. The other white member is a local banker.

On issues of black and white, Rodney says he has had little difficulty. He has had a number of relationships

with whites. Whites serve on his board at the center and there have been whites on his staff. More recently whites helped in the surveys conducted by the economic development team.

Racially mixed groups continually use the center as a meeting place, and Rodney's friendships with some of the people he has met through these contacts, like the scholarship backer, have been sustaining and rewarding. He confesses that some Wesley House programs probably would not have succeeded without some of the white money that has come in.

But Rodney's primary focus is to aid the black community. He explains it in an almost poetic style:

"We want to take people off the begging lines and give them a prideful share in their community. You train a man for a job and you open a door. You get a black entrepreneur to invest in a black business and you open a window. You give kids a hand with tutoring and scholarships and maybe they'll come back to the ghetto to multiply the helping hands." □

Vietnam Christian Service

Helping People Rebuild Their Own Country

WHEN YOU have lived in Viet Nam for two years, within sight of fire fights and within sound of rocket fire, a marked tenseness lingers in the eyes. You remember particularly the associate killed in a senseless ambush, the symbols of the Americanization of Viet Nam like the Saigon ZIP code and the fancy Jeeps driven by American personnel, and the hurt suspicion of Vietnamese people toward most foreigners, even toward those who, like you, spoke Vietnamese.

Betty and Lynn Vogel have been there. Two years, in fact, in Saigon as professional social workers employed by the American church cooperative agency, Vietnam Christian Service (VNCS).

They are back now, Lynn as a doctoral candidate in international social work at the University of Chicago, Betty as a bread-winning social worker in a south Chicago private agency for pregnant teen-agers. Beyond Lynn's graduation they envision joint careers overseas as social workers in still other cultures equally as strange to Americans as the Viet Nam mode, but hopefully not as war wracked.

As they recall their work with VNCS, the words come quickly, almost therapeutically fast. Their newish apartment in a racially mixed Chicago neighborhood south of the university is colorfully furnished in a mixture of American mod and Vietnamese ancient. Their gray cat, rescued only months earlier from a Saigon alley, hunches warily along the wall, and Betty and Lynn show unusual concern that this sole living reminder of their years abroad will survive the transition from steamy Saigon to chilly Chicago.

Bidding their visitors make themselves comfortable, the Vogels unfold their remarks logically, scarcely needing the interviewer's prompting.

On their joining VNCS: LYNN—After I had decided to apply for conscientious objector status, my next task was to seek out some kind of alternative service placement, particularly for a social worker. While I was searching, I heard a sermon by J. Harry Haines, executive director of the United Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief. Harry said social workers were needed in Viet Nam, and soon thereafter I began my application to go there.

Betty and I met at the University of Chicago where we both were working on our master's degrees in social work. She has a degree in religion from Duke University, and my bachelor's degree is in sociology from the University of Chicago. After we became engaged to be married, she began her application, too, to go to Viet Nam as a social worker.

We didn't exhaustively search any job possibilities other than going to Viet Nam because we became convinced that that was where we wanted to be. There seemed to be a great deal of misinformation and prejudice about the people there and about the war, and we wanted to go find out for ourselves what was happening.

On arriving in Saigon: BETTY—Our first night there was one we won't soon forget. We were given housing, temporarily, near the language center where all VNCS workers spend their first two months full time in training, learning the language. We heard these fantastically loud and strange noises which turned out to be outgoing artillery fire, only we didn't have enough sense to know that it was *outgoing*. Also jet-plane engines whooshed all night long, and we couldn't pinpoint where they were coming from. But we comforted ourselves that we were in a neighborhood with people who lived there all the time, who waked up next morning and went to work. We figured if they could do it, we ought to be able to stand the situation at least for one night.

On the reality of war: LYNN—Although it was clear in Saigon that fighting was going on, it was not as if we were on the front lines. There were no fire fights in the middle of the streets. But what you had to live with and adjust to was a certain level of tension. You knew that you could become a target at any time just because you were an American or just because you happened to be on the street at a certain time and place. Terrorist attacks, particularly against Americans, were not unknown. Being a church worker had very little to do with our acceptance or nonacceptance or our kind of image. First and foremost we were Americans, or rather first and foremost we were foreigners. If we spoke with a Vietnamese in Vietnamese, he would immediately assume we were French, which carries with it some degree of protection, at least more than being an American.

BETTY—In Saigon itself we *felt* fairly safe and removed from real danger. You could see all around proof of the war—barbed wire around buildings, armed convoys, guards at all buildings. You could hear artillery and incoming rockets. They were never close but you were always tense.

LYNN—For many Vietnamese people life continues on. For most of them it is not a process of dodging bullets or running from fire fights. You could take a bus and see planes dive-bomb suspected communist positions or

you could be in your car and have to wait four or five hours for a possible ambush to be cleared. One could run into those kinds of things but we were not directly involved. If we saw a fire fight or if there had been a bombing the night before, we stayed away. In our jobs we were involved in rebuilding, and we saw the aftermath rather than the direct effects. It is important to realize that war is not something which occupies all of Viet Nam every moment, though this is the impression many Americans have. We were able to carry out medical and social work in spite of the war. Obviously, there were some hazards, places where our people had to be back in their houses by five o'clock before the "changing of the guard" when the government troops went home and the enemy came out and worked the same territory. But the notion that we couldn't do anything positive because the war was going on is really very false.

On their specific assignments: BETTY—My major assignment in Saigon was to work with the National Rehabilitation Institute, a government-sponsored agency providing artificial limbs and braces, physical therapy, and vocational training for any handicapped person. Most of our patients were war victims or veterans, but there were also diseased persons, victims of polio or cerebral palsy.

As a professional social worker, I worked with a young

A souvenir of Betty and Lynn Vogel's two years in Viet Nam as church-related social workers is a vase crafted from a spent shell case. The Vogels believe that dedication is important for Americans wanting to help the Vietnamese rebuild, but they must have professional and language skills, too.



Vietnamese social worker newly out of school like myself. My role officially was that of adviser to her, essentially to be a personal friend to her. We established a general counseling service to try to get people thinking about vocational training and about how they were going to readjust their lives. We were very limited in what we could do. The number of patients might be as high as 400 to 500 a month. To cope with this number we had a staff of three—myself, the trained Vietnamese social worker, and one untrained assistant. We settled for finding the people most likely to benefit from vocational training, who had some education and showed some interest. But the most important thing she and I did was to persuade the institute to bring in three young girls so we could train them to do this work in the provinces. The most exciting thing for my own learning was to watch persons grow, to see a small group of Vietnamese people cope with their own problems.

LYNN—During our first several weeks following our two months language training I directed one of the community centers which had a literacy program, Head Start-type classes, a loan fund, and housing programs for the agency [VNCS]. But after about six months it became clear that my second-in-command, a Vietnamese, was much more competent to direct the work because of (1) language and (2) she was Vietnamese and could communicate better than I could.

This goes back to the problem of being an American in Viet Nam. No matter what your facilities are in the language, you are first and foremost a foreigner, and it is a very serious handicap. I phased out after six months and became director of Saigon projects in general and took as one of my goals the replacement of Westerners with Vietnamese.

My greatest sense of accomplishment is in the fact that when we left there was a Vietnamese as director of the Saigon project. It is very important to have a Vietnamese as a director because if we didn't, we could become American imperialists doing things *for* people rather than *with* them. So I have no problem with the idea of putting Vietnamese in charge. Where the push comes in is that there has to be some feedback to the States and this is most effective if your own people are there who understand the situation in the States and the kinds of publicity and promotion that are needed so the funds will come. The question is whether we need Westerners all up and down the scale or only a small number.

How many Westerners were there when you arrived and when you left? LYNN—About four years ago VNCS had 75 Western staff members. They occupied every administrative position and every unit head position. When we arrived two years later, the number had dropped to 60, and when we left in September, 1971, there were less than 40. Much of the reduction took place in Saigon as well as in smaller units up country where the number of Westerners in individual units was reduced.

On the history of VNCS: LYNN—The Mennonite Central Committee came to Viet Nam in 1954 to work with refugees, primarily in relief. Even before American military involvement became heavy, the Mennonites had established close ties with the Tin Lahn Church, the Protestant

church of Viet Nam, and the Mennonites saw as one of their goals the strengthening of the Tin Lahn Church. In 1958-59 the Mennonite Mission Board sent missionaries to help build the church, and the Mennonite Central Committee people remained to work in relief.

In 1966 Church World Service and Lutheran World Relief both expressed some interest in working in Viet Nam, drawing on the Mennonite experiences. They asked the Mennonites to continue with them in a tripartite agency known as Vietnam Christian Service with the Mennonites as the administrative agency. This continued along until January, 1970, when Church World Service became the administrative agency, and the Mennonite Central Committee and Lutheran World Relief assumed supportive roles.

I understand that Betty and I are two of 31 workers who have been provided for VNCS through the United Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief. The last I heard VNCS had 200 personnel, including 150 Vietnamese and 50 from Europe, America, and Asia.

In the middle 1950s the Mennonites started in hospitals, working with the Tin Lahn Church. Mennonites provided nurses, doctors, funds, supplies—many kinds of direct support and always in close cooperation with the Tin Lahn. The Tin Lahns feel that in order to do what is proper for a Protestant church, it is necessary that all persons in that organization be Protestant Christians. Others say that the quality of the work is more important, whether it is done by a Buddhist or Catholic or other. So this kind of pulls in different directions, one saying we should be working toward conversion of Vietnamese to Protestant Christianity, another saying we should be there as social-welfare workers in relief and development and encourage the Vietnamese to carry the ball. Church World Service has tended to be more a social service agency, certainly more than the Mennonite Central Committee. Some Vietnamese working for VNCS were neither Protestants nor Christians but they are doing a tremendously commendable job.

BETTY—The motives for Vietnamization can be misunderstood, both militarily and otherwise. Some say the Americans are pulling out to save their skins. My personal goal for the girl I worked with was for her to become self-sufficient, and as long as we understood this, we worked together beautifully. It could have been misinterpreted that I was pushing work off on her and didn't want to be bothered with hard work.

On American conduct of the war: BETTY—The hardest thing for me to live with as an American was the Laotian invasion because that was where the Vietnamese were getting most soundly defeated and killed. They felt very strongly that the invasion was for the purpose of protecting Yankee lives. My friends would tell me how much they had lost there, their relatives and friends. They felt that they had been betrayed, that Americans had planned the invasion and sent Vietnamese to die in place of Americans knowing they would not be successful.

What about My Lai? BETTY—My Lai-type incidents are not purely an American problem. The Vietnamese military would go into a village and wipe it out in the same way. They would be just as scared as the Americans and have

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no way to tell who was a supporter and who was opposed to them.

LYNN—After My Lai, *Newsweek* magazine asked us to ask around for Vietnamese reaction. All the Vietnamese I talked to had absolutely no interest in My Lai. They thought the whole business was purely an American face-saving thing, and if the Americans wanted to save face, that was their business. We understood that "My Lai" happened all over Viet Nam whether with government soldiers, Communists, or American forces.

On Lynn's being a conscientious objector: LYNN—Reactions varied all the way from people who felt that a conscientious objector (C.O.) had no place in Viet Nam to those who I suspect were quite envious of my position, not only because I didn't have to put up with the hassle and the military but also because my wife was with me. One thing married GIs miss is their wives. I heard more comments on this than on any other subject. Betty was there because she was a qualified professional and she had a job to do.

One of the problems we got into was that some military people think all Americans should be wholehearted supporters of the American military. Some church people feel that way, too. One of the most difficult tasks we had was to try to explain our work in such a way as to maintain separate identity from the military.

When you consider C.O. status, you have to realize that there are political decisions you will have to live with the rest of your life. Quakers live with this all their lives, but it is different when you are not from a historic peace church. I doubt very much that my having been a C.O. will have any effect on my professional career because my working as a professional in Viet Nam will have some very direct applications back here. If I choose to make a career in government, though, I doubt I can rise above a certain level because I have chosen to go against tradition. The thing that has opened up for us is the possibility of working overseas, of becoming students of other cultures. In Viet Nam we got different images of ourselves and of Americans that were very exhilarating, and we received a fresh outlook on what is happening.

BETTY—I agree with Lynn on our new perspective. Now we don't accept anything at face value. Another big thing that is particularly useful to me is the experience of trying to live in and learn from another culture. We could never ever tell them what to do in a given situation. A girl would bring a problem to me and ask what to do, but I could never tell her what I would do as the answer. I had to learn to use a process to help her find an answer. I might say, "Well, if you did it this way, what would happen?" The answer might not fit in American culture, but I had to realize that this was not my culture.

On the Western church's role in Viet Nam: LYNN—There are several problems in working overseas with an administrative agency based in the U.S. The basic conflict is whether the commitment to that country is in relief or emergency areas or situations which do not require professional personnel or whether the commitment is to a long-term development program which does require special training—people willing to make an investment,

to get involved in helping rebuild a society as in Viet Nam.

Within VNCS this kind of conflict is developing. For example, it is somewhat unfair to recruit a professional agriculturalist and perhaps his wife for Viet Nam and send them to a unit location and then not provide transportation for them to get anywhere. Further it is somewhat unfair to recruit a medical person and expect him to perform certain kinds of tasks if he does not have access to medical things that he needs.

Within VNCS we have failed in each of these instances to give the necessary backup support and requisite training because of a limited understanding of what professional people need to do their jobs well. The emphasis has been on sending dedicated people to Viet Nam, people dedicated to serving the church or to serving overseas. And quite frankly, the people in Viet Nam do not need any more dedicated people. They need technical people who have a sense of dedication but who also have something else. It became clear to Betty and me that when we were able to communicate we did so through our language and professional skills. Without those we would have been totally helpless.

BETTY—On the other hand, we would have been failures if we had gone only with technical skills. You need both skills and dedication. The dedication may or may not have a religious basis. To me the most important thing is caring for the people. Knowing their language communicates caring. It says, I think your culture is so worthwhile that I am going to try to learn to communicate with it.

LYNN—One further point. It is fine to have Christian dedication, but if there is no way to communicate that dedication, then it is absolutely lost. Communications are strained enough at best. The Vietnamese people's country has been overrun and in some sense destroyed first by the Japanese, then the French, and now by Americans. Somehow you have to get by their initial suspicion of you as a foreigner. The time when you could go to Viet Nam or any "third world" country and just be there as a presence is gone. If you are coming to help build a country, that's fine; you'll be accepted on that basis. But if you are just coming to sit for two years and go back and tell people that you've been there, then you have wasted money and probably have been a detriment to the people that you were supposed to be helping.

Sadly, we felt in our own agency [VNCS] and within our own church agency in New York there are some who simply could not understand this. During our debriefing period in New York perhaps a dozen people interviewed us. Out of that dozen perhaps three could understand the kinds of experiences we had gone through and could understand what it meant to have the kind of language capacity we had and who could, in a sense, talk with us about that experience.

Then there are others who would ask, "How was Viet Nam?" That's an almost unanswerable question. The people who begin in a bit more subtle way, who ask questions that deal with feeling and sensitivities and life-style and culture—these are the kinds of people you can relate to. We feel there are far too few of these people involved in running church programs. □

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When Soybeans Are Mo

By MARTHA A. LANE
Associate Editor, *Together*

ROBERT L. EVANS is an ordinary guy with extraordinarily far-reaching influence. He raises corn, beef cattle, and soybeans on his central Illinois farm as do thousands of other Midwest farmers. But Mr. Evans also has extensive investments overseas—poultry in Greece and Malawi, for example; seeds in the Philippines, Brazil, Ghana, and Nigeria; well drilling in Botswana; and (would you believe?) family planning in Indonesia.

The "company" through which Mr. Evans invests is CROP, the community hunger appeal of Church World Service, which for 25 years has extended Christian compassion to hungry people around the globe through donated cash and commodities.

CROP dates back to the end of World War II when Americans began to understand that people were actually starving in Europe. In September, 1945, a boxcar of wheat was shipped to Holland by several churches. Church World Service was formed the following year. Soon entire "friendship trains" and "friendship ships" were being filled with wheat for Europe. From 1947 to

1952 alone CROP donations totaled some 5,500 boxcar loads of commodities.

In the early 1960s, when vast numbers of U.S. farmers were migrating to towns and cities in search of better jobs, CROP began to shift its emphasis from sending commodities to cash contributions. This has proved a more practical approach in most situations.

Bob Evans first heard about CROP about five years ago at his local church, Macon United Methodist. He had become a Christian only recently and was "seeking ways to serve Jesus in the world."

There was another reason why CROP appealed to him: "It has always bothered me that in the U.S. we are paid not to produce when there are so many places where people are starving by the thousands daily for lack of food we could be sharing with them."

The first year he participated, Mr. Evans designated the proceeds from two acres for CROP. In 1970, he and his two teen-aged sons worked 35 acres for CROP as a "friendship farm." Six local businesses helped with donations of seed and fertilizer.



han a Crop

Last year Bob Evans invited the church-school class he teaches—Macon United Methodist senior highs—to help him with a friendship farm. “I believe we can have all the faith in the world, but until we exercise that faith by action, it is of little value,” he had taught them.

To get the project rolling, 18 class members donated \$5 each for seed, and the class netted an additional \$80 by sponsoring a church dinner. Bob Evans set aside 30 of his 280 acres for CROP. His uncle plowed it, he planted it, and his sons hoed and cultivated. A neighbor farmer gave them a special price on the seed, and a local business provided the herbicide.

The crop—soybeans—was planted toward the end of May. In June the young plants suffered some hail damage. Late in July the class spent two hot days cutting weeds by hand. Three months later the soybeans were harvested—1,000 bushels of them valued at \$3,210. On December 23 the beans, along with another 700 bushels purchased with donations from other Macon County residents, began a 60-day journey to Taiwan where they are to be used as food-for-work payments to Taiwanese building such projects as irrigation systems



Bob Evans (below) is one of more than a million Americans who fight hunger through CROP. Profits from their harvests provide, for example, improved seeds for Filipinos. This woman's tribe has terraced rice for 3,000 years.



and roads. Taiwan is one area where a raw crop like soybeans can be used in this way.

The more common procedure is for crops to be sold and the cash proceeds given to CROP for designated overseas projects. Several nations received money from Illinois CROP supporters last year:

- Brazil received aid through DIACONIA, a Brazilian Christian service agency whose program emphases are maternity aid, child care, and school-lunch programs; emergency disaster relief; community programs for nutrition, literacy, vocational training, and agriculture; and institutional aid to persons in hospitals, orphanages, and homes for the elderly. CROP's gifts to Brazil often take the form of commodities such as beans which are used as wages for workers in local development programs. (Approximately 80 percent of DIACONIA's budget is raised from Brazilian sources, making it a true self-help agency.)

- Mani is a mountainous, isolated part of southern Greece where a three-year agricultural development project was begun in 1968. CROP funds have provided 15,000 almond, apricot, and walnut seedlings; roads; goats, hogs, and cattle; establishment of several poultry cooperatives; grass and vegetable seeds; improvement of Mani's bee industry; even mulberry trees on which silk worms can be raised. Most projects and goals are determined by village people themselves. The Greek government now is providing electricity and more roads.

- The Philippine government has set self-sufficiency in food crops as a major national goal. CROP funds have provided pesticides, vegetable seeds, better livestock, and agricultural training at the village level.

- Split beans for Nigeria and well-drilling equipment for Botswana rounded out the designated projects. Some money also went into general funds, to be used where most needed.

CROP is active in 32 states, often through state councils of churches. The Illinois setup is typical. State Director Lowell H. Brown finds people interested in solving the world hunger problem. He then pulls together a committee to conduct a community canvass. There are about 63 county-wide committees in his state. The local groups carry out promotion, publicity, and collections with materials and guidelines provided by the national office.

United Methodists hold many key volunteer positions in Illinois. As a campaign director, Clayton E. Munson contacts community leaders and pastors in nine townships in De Kalb County. The Rev. Glenn K. Ioder in Pontiac encourages key laymen to get involved in the program. Retired minister Selden L. Myers, chairman of the Marshall-Putnam County CROP board, is the link between county officers and the state director; he must find needed committee chairmen, help them with their work, and see that funds get to the national office in Elkhart, Ind., on time. As Winnebago County secretary, the Rev. Clare B. Hewitt keeps in close contact with township leaders and canvassers. And as managing editor of Lincoln's newspaper, Ken Goodrich naturally is his county's publicity director. The list of United Methodists Mr. Brown works with goes on and on.

The biggest fund-raising efforts traditionally are door-to-door canvasses. (Member denominations of Church World Service—The United Methodist Church is one of 30—provide no denominational funds for CROP. And

CROP makes no financial appeals within member churches. Emphasis is on appealing to the community as a whole.) Some 100,000 volunteer canvassers worked in more than 500 counties across the nation last year, contacting at least 1 million Americans.

Friendship farms such as Bob Evans's is another way in which people participate. How many acres a farmer gives is entirely up to him. In Illinois, for example, last year's farms ranged from 2 1/2 to nearly 100 acres. Any crop can be grown. The profits are turned over to CROP after the harvest. Similarly, livestock breeders may raise selected animals to marketable age, sell them, and give the proceeds to CROP. A variation of the friendship farm is the "friendship acre," an individual acre set aside for a Lord's acre type of contribution. A tenth of Illinois' CROP funds are raised on friendship acres.

Among young people an increasingly popular way of raising funds for CROP is the hunger walk. Hikers receive a predetermined amount of money from sponsors for each mile they complete. Young people also have collected money at shopping centers and at Halloween. At least one group of soldiers canvassed for CROP on their military base. In Watervliet, Mich., women in a diet club estimate how much they save by consuming fewer groceries and pass the savings on to CROP. In Grand Forks, N.Dak., an ecumenical group of more than 100 young people has staged several special events for CROP, including a religious folk musical.

Corporations also make significant contributions to CROP—more than \$1 million worth of manufactured food products, seeds, medicines, and agricultural chemicals a year. Some donations are "seconds" or are dated. Food contributions may have had an unimportant ingredient accidentally omitted, so that the finished product does not conform to its contents label. Baby foods, pancake flour, jellies, honey, instant breakfasts (very good because of their high protein content), and other foods have been donated for such reasons.

Many organizations as old as CROP have been phased out of existence because they no longer meet people's needs, but CROP is still going strong, thanks to its ability to size up basic needs and to change its approach accordingly. CROP leaders knew in 1952 that the days of shipping wheat to Europe were over. They also recognized early that one must strike at grass-root problems to solve hunger, hence the current CROP emphasis on family planning and population control and self-help community projects.

Back in 1968 Illinois Director Lowell Brown, a United Methodist, spent a month in East Africa to get a first-hand look at CROP projects. His impression: "CROP is doing immeasurable good for millions of people. I was convinced of that before I went abroad, but I came back more determined to do everything I can to eliminate the misery, suffering, and poverty of those children of God."

Mr. Brown was impressed by CROP's ability to be flexible overseas. He also mentions a plus feature of its at-home program. "CROP offers to local churches—particularly in the rural areas and towns and villages—the best tool yet devised for the expression of local ecumenicity," he says. "Working with people without regard to denomination or vocation, but just as a group of Christians concerned about getting a most important job done, has been a very meaningful experience for me." □

New Life Together

*Third in a Series of Bible Studies
on the Book of Acts*

The Gathered Community

By EDWARD W. BAUMAN

STARTLING REPORTS have appeared lately of business executives who are "dropping out." We are accustomed to using this phrase in connection with the younger generation, but the feelings of restless discontent which lead to a "drop out" reaction are not limited to young people. Successful men, unable to find lasting satisfaction in their work, are giving up highly paid positions in order to work with their hands, return to the farm, or seek a deeper meaning for their lives in some other way.

At every level and in every segment of society there is a growing need to find ultimate meaning. In spite of our material affluence, we know that something vital is missing from our lives, and growing numbers of us are willing to take risks in order to find out what it is.

But this is precisely what the good news of the gospel is all about! It is about a God who loves us so much that he has acted in a very special way to reveal this deeper meaning to life. He has shown us in Jesus Christ how to live and how to love fully and deeply, realizing all our potential as human persons. What we see exemplified in Christ is a style of life in which we live in union with God, loving him with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, trusting him unconditionally. As this relationship grows, we enter into a greater wholeness of life than we have ever known before.

In one of Tennessee Williams's plays an emotionally disturbed woman is trying to put the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together. Her hands are shaking as she cries out to

her daughter, "The pieces don't fit together! The pieces don't fit together!" This is the way it is with our lives until we enter into a union with God and discover how everything begins to fit into place around this central piece in the puzzle of life.

Fortunately, God has provided a special community within which we can learn this most important lesson. This community is an essential part of the good news because it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to enter fully into union with God on our own. We need the mutual love and support of others who are following this same way, seeking fullness of life through Christ.

This is precisely what the church is intended to provide, a community of faith into which God calls us so that he can give us wholeness of life through our relationship with others. As a result of the mutually upbuilding life-sharing which is present in the church, we experience life at its best and realize the ultimate purpose for our existence. As one young man said to me, "My church is the only clearing in my forest of defeats." The strength and insight which he received in the clearing made it possible for him to continue to try to make sense of the defeats and to rise above them.

ANYONE who identifies with other members of the church in this search for life's deepest meaning soon discovers a creative rhythm in the community's life. There is a continuous gathering and scattering which takes place, a time to be with one another and a time to be apart. God assembles us for an inward journey and then disperses us in an outward journey. He gathers us together in order to impart his life to us and then scatters us in the world to share his life with others.

The vitality of every local church depends upon the healthful balance in this rhythm of coming together and going into the world. There is more than meets the eye in the comment of one man who heard me present this idea in a television lecture: "The trouble with my church is that it doesn't know whether it's coming or going!"

Any church in such a predicament has not been reading the New Testament because the biblical precedent for this basic pattern is clear, especially in the Book of Acts. The action in the first chapter begins with the statement, "when they had come together." The second chapter, probably the most important in the book, opens in the same way: "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place." Other passages in Acts tell us of their gathering for prayer, for worship, for common meals, and to face organizational problems.

At the same time, the disciples found themselves scattering in the world, sharing with others the new life they had received in their time together. This was in direct obedience to the commission which Jesus had given them: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8) The acts of the apostles were primarily acts of witness and mission as they shared the good news of Christ with the world.

The basic rhythm of church life recorded in Acts is worthy of careful study in every local congregation. Many of us, for example, have found a great deal of practical help in Acts 2:42. This verse occurs toward the end of the chapter which describes the gift of the Spirit to the early

Christians on the day of Pentecost. After this transforming experience, "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Here is an excellent working principle for every local congregation because it shows us three essential functions of the gathered community.

First of all, we should be devoting ourselves to "the apostles' teaching." It comes as a shock to realize that Christian education is mentioned first in this list of activities in the early church because education in the contemporary church is having a difficult time. We devote very little time to it, often dividing the congregation into classes for one hour a week under leaders who admit they are unequipped for the job. I do not know of any more dedicated church members than the church-school teachers, but many of them are very discouraged because so few church members are willing to "devote themselves to the apostles' teaching."

The early church understood the need for continuing education. After a person had responded in faith to the good news of what God had done in Christ, he needed to be nourished in his faith. After the apostolic preaching brought hundreds of persons into the church, the next step was to teach them about the ministry and message of Jesus. Leaders in the early church clearly understood that a primary function of the gathered community is the continuous education of the members.

Fortunately, there are some hopeful signs on the educational horizon. In our own congregation a series of adult short courses proved popular, providing an alternative to the traditional Bible class which no longer appeals to many adults. We added a creative arts program to our children's schedule, an extended Sunday-morning session which involves the children on many different levels. Other churches are experimenting with weekday sessions, some are mixing age groups in an attempt to bridge the generation gap, and a few are even writing their own material. A week-night "dialogue with the minister" has been successful in our church, providing an opportunity for ministers and congregation to learn from one another. The important thing about all this is the growing realization in many congregations that "devotion to the apostles' teaching" is a primary function of the gathered church.

THE SECOND function listed in Acts 2:42 is already familiar to us because we have discussed it in the past. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship." The word "fellowship" here is a translation of *koinonia*, the New Testament word for the special quality of life-sharing which permeates a Christian congregation. The mutual love and trust between members of the church is so deep that we are literally members of one body. Through this relationship with others we are healed and strengthened and equipped for our ministry to the world.

What this means is that one of the primary functions of the church is simply to be the church. We are to be the life-sharing community in order that as many persons as possible may find new life through participation in the community. As indicated in our previous discussion, we may experience *koinonia* by gathering in small groups for such purposes as Bible study or prayer. Increasing numbers of congregations are providing these small-group opportunities for their members.

But we may also experience *koinonia* in many other activities of church life if we are open to the presence of God in our midst. A church supper can be more than a church supper, a committee meeting more than a committee meeting when we have gathered "in his name." These can provide opportunities for life-sharing in which individuals relate to one another in such honest and loving ways that healing and new life are given and received. In evaluating the local congregation we need to raise the question of whether we are fulfilling this spirit of *koinonia*. The quality of our coming together can provide God with countless opportunities to give new life to individuals in the family of the church.

THE THIRD function of the gathered community mentioned in Acts 2:42 is the one most often associated with the church because "the breaking of bread and the prayers" is a reference to early Christian worship. The breaking of bread is the Eucharist or Lord's Supper, the sacrament through which we are nourished and by which we symbolize our identification with the body of Christ. The prayers were the earliest form of the liturgy, the structure which Christian worship assumed in the early days of the church. When we gather together in the spirit of Christ, we often devote ourselves to worship.

The new vitality which has come to Christian worship in recent years is one of the most encouraging signs of genuine renewal. Many of the "old wineskins" of worship, no longer able to contain the bubbly new wine of the Spirit, are being replaced. Contemporary language and contemporary music are helping us relate the eternal values of worship to the pressing problems of life in today's world. Preachers are learning how to proclaim the good news while standing with one foot in the Scripture and the other in the world. Laymen are participating more, especially in the "services of celebration" which many churches are holding. It is good to know that these developments are making it possible for worship to become for us what it was in the beginning, an experience of inspiration, healing, and guidance which centers around the adoration of God and the celebration of his presence.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Every local church can use this verse as a working principle for evaluating itself as a "gathered people."

Measure your budget, for example, against this principle. How much of your spending supports these functions of your life together? How much time is spent in committee and board meetings developing these areas of concern? It is all too easy for us to become totally involved in maintaining the religious institution as an end in itself. But the institution is valuable only to the degree to which it provides the opportunity for the members to gather together to receive wholeness of life from God and the strength to minister in love to the world.

This ministry to the world is an inevitable result of our life together. We will move on from this point to see what the Book of Acts has to say about our mission as a scattered people, but there is no use talking about this unless we have something to give in our mission. That which we have to give is the very life of God himself which has been given to us through our coming together as the gathered community of Christ. □

TV & Films

JOE MCGINNIS in his book *The Selling of the President 1968* (Trident Press, \$5.95, cloth; \$1.25, paper) summarizes one point of view regarding the contemporary approach to the electorate by candidates seeking public office:

"Advertising, in many ways, is a con game, too. Human beings do not need new automobiles every third year; a color television set brings little enrichment of the human experience; a higher or lower hemline, no expansion of consciousness, no increase in the capacity to love.

"It is not surprising then, that politicians and advertising men should have discovered one another. And, once they recognized that the citizen did not so much vote for a candidate as make a psychological purchase of him, not surprising that they began to work together."

We are now launched into our quadrennial quadrille wherein candidates offer themselves for high state and national office. In this exercise the media play a central role, and none more so than television. Is it possible to so package a candidate via advertising that whatever his assets or deficits, the public can be sold an image? McGinniss seems to believe it is.

Another point of view was given by CBS Vice-Chairman Frank Stanton. Dr. Stanton observed in an address at Boston University that two of the last three presidential elections have been won by margins of less than 1 percent in the popular vote. Said the CBS executive: "Americans vote as they do for so many complex reasons that they have kept the art of politics a mystery to baffle not only candidates but also scholars who analyze public opinion."

The fact remains that a great deal of political money will flow into the coffers of the television industry in the months ahead. Four of the candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination have agreed to limit their broadcast budgets to 5¢ per vote in the primary campaigns. The total would range from about \$19,000 each in New Hampshire to \$435,000 in California.

The general-election sweepstakes is another matter. One proposal offered some months ago by the Democrats would have set an \$8,400,000 limit during the September-to-November presidential campaign for television/radio with about \$13,900,000 to be expended in all media.

That kind of budget would not be out of line to launch a new product on the market. It could be argued that candidates for the highest office in the land ought to be able to spend as much to reach the electorate as it takes to reach the public on behalf of a new soap or toothpaste.

That thesis raises two questions, the first being, Who foots the bill? Can only the wealthy or those willing to compromise with monied interests run for office? The other question, the one dealt with here, has to do with the ethics of packaging a candidate via advertising so as to create those images which most appeal to the mass public.

This column has repeatedly stressed that what the

viewer brings to the television set is the most important component in any experience with the medium. It is important to keep the brain engaged while being assaulted with political ads. What are the pictures and words designed to convey? What feelings do they evoke in you? What is left unsaid? How does this square with what you know about the candidate's total record, his position on major issues?

To make voting decisions only on the basis of ads is to cop out. We had better watch the news, the interviews and press conferences, too—and read as much as possible the sources which assess the candidates. With that kind of background to bring to the ads, we will be able to sort out the manipulative from the meaningful, the demeaning from the decent.

Six hundred thousand young Americans have given their lives in this nation's history in order that we might maintain and perfect our democracy. That is too great a sacrifice to demean by permitting the winning candidate in any election to be the one with the smoothest, best-financed Madison Avenue packaging.

—David O. Poindexter

TV HIGHLIGHTS THIS MONTH

Feb. 20, 7:30-9:30 p.m., EST on CBS—Second half of *Ben Hur*. (May be preempted by President Nixon's trip to China.)

Feb. 21, 8-9 p.m., EST on ABC—*The Enchanted World of Danny Kaye: The Emperor's New Clothes*.

Feb. 22, 7:30-8:30 p.m., EST on NBC—*Port 5, The Search for the Nile: Find Livingstone*.

Feb. 22, 8-9 p.m., EST on CBS—*National Geographic special: Men of the Serengeti*.

Feb. 22, 8:30-9:30 p.m., EST on NBC—*The Harlem Globe Trotters*.

Feb. 26, 12:30-1 p.m., EST on CBS—*You Are There: The Mystery of Amelia Earhart*.

Feb. 28, 7:30-9:30 p.m., EST on CBS—*Shoot-out at OK Corral*, Wyatt Earp versus the Younger brothers.

Feb. 28, 8-9 p.m., EST on ABC—*Fol-de-Rol*.

Feb. 29, 7:30-8:30 p.m., EST on NBC—*Port 5, The Search for the Nile: Conquest And Death*.

Feb. 29, 8:30-9:30 p.m., EST on NBC—*The Fabulous Fardies*—Tennessee Ernie Ford, Betty Grable, Dick Haymes, Maureen O'Hara.

March 4, 12:30-1 p.m., EST on CBS—*You Are There: The Fall of Troy*.

March 6, 8-9 p.m., EST on ABC—*Champions*. What makes Olympic champions tick?

March 7, 7:30-9:30 p.m., EST on NBC—*The Wizard of Oz*.

March 12, 5-6 p.m., EST on NBC—*Ed McMahon at Cypress Gardens*.

March 13, 9-10 p.m., EST on NBC—*Johnny Carson Presents Sun City Scandals—1972*. Everyone in the cast is 65 or older.

March 13, 10:30-11 p.m., EST on ABC—*A Bird's-eye View of California*. Harry Reasoner reports from a helicopter.

March 14, 7:30-8:30 p.m., EST on NBC—*Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree*.

March 14, 8:30-10 p.m., EST on ABC—*The Grammy Awards*.

March 15, 8:30-9:30 p.m., EST on ABC—*Hellzapoppin*. Updated version produced by Broadway impresario Alexander Cohen.

March 20, 8-9 p.m., EST on ABC—*Octopus, Octopus*, Jacques Cousteau special.

CURRENT FILMS OF INTEREST

Kotch (GP)—Walter Matthau is superb as the grandfather who gets on his daughter-in-law's nerves with his nonstop talking. Facing banishment to a nursing home, Matthau befriends a pregnant, unmarried teen-ager, and the two set up housekeeping to await the birth. Performances by the girl (Deborah Winters) and Matthau are excellent as they find a rapport appropriate to the lonely and discorded. The baby's birth is vividly portrayed in a scene too tense for younger children. The film is warm and funny otherwise, and gently reminds us that age can bring a perspective for which younger generations should be grateful.

\$ (R)—Money is the motivation and the purpose of this con film which involves the complicated procedure of robbing safe deposit boxes in a German bank. Warren Beatty is the bank employee who locates three boxes filled with illegally obtained funds (gambling, dope, and kickbacks). He transfers the money to the box of a scatter-brained prostitute (Gaille Hawn), who serves as his accomplice. Strictly a surface film, complete with exciting robbery and chase, but like all surface films \$ leaves unanswered the question of moral responsibility. Is it enough to say that the stolen money was also stolen? □

PETITION RULES TOLD FOR GENERAL CONFERENCE

Any United Methodist lay member, minister, or organization may submit a petition to the 1972 General Conference but only by following procedures spelled out in *The Book of Discipline*.

All petitions must be filed not later than March 16 (30 days prior to the opening of sessions in Atlanta, Ga.). Three copies of each petition must be filed on 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper.

Each petition may deal with only one subject, and each must be addressed "To the Membership of the General Conference."

All petitions must be signed and must contain the name and address of the person sending the petition, name of local church if from an individual, name of annual conference if from a minister, or name of organization if from an organization.

Petitions should be mailed to:
The Rev. Newell P. Knudson
Petition Secretary
P. O. Box 359
Tracy, Calif. 95376

At the General Conference itself petitions are assigned to Legislative Committees which are obligated to consider them individually and to report back to the conference with votes of concurrence or nonconcurrence.

CENTURY CLUB

Two Pennsylvania women join our TOGETHER Century Club this month.

Mrs. Martha Armstrong, 100, Warren, Pa.

Mrs. Lucy Clemons, 101, Williamsport, Pa.

In submitting nominations for the Century Club, please include the nominee's present address, date of birth, name of church where a member, and location.

Survey on Giving Finds General Church Support

A two-year study involving 15 Protestant denominations, including United Methodists, to determine why people give to the church reveals some additionally interesting views about the church.

The survey was compiled by a division of the National Council of Churches (NCC) from interviews with 3,500 pastors and laymen in the U.S. and Canada.

According to the study, people basically give out of a sense of gratitude to God and a religious awareness for the privilege of being able to share. The report further said most people feel that giving is an intimate part of worship.

However, the report also said fewer persons increased the amounts they contributed to the church last year than in previous years. Cited as chief reasons were irregular income, unemployment, and a desire to provide "the good things of life for one's family."

Pastors were shown to give far more proportionately for church support than laymen. Eighty-four percent of the pastors queried said they had increased their giving in the last three years. Only 47 percent of the laymen made increases for the same period.

Data showed that most pastors use as a basis for their giving the traditional time, talent, and money standard. On the other hand, laymen's decisions about how much they will give the church are heavily influenced by obligations to their families.

Differing social situations between pastor and laymen were also considered factors. For example, since most pastors' houses, utilities, and car allowances, however small, are provided, ministers get some relief from worry about those items which are of substantial concern to laymen. Therefore a wage increase for the pastor is usually translated into his giving more money to the church. An increase for the layman means more money to spend for many other things besides a gift to the church.

As a result of the interview findings, three categories of suggestions were drawn up dealing with the local church and (1) denomination, (2) giving, and (3) ecumenicity.

On ways to improve ties between local church and the denomination, it was recommended that new techniques for listening to

church members and pastors be developed. The report claimed past methods had not been successful. The report said the mood of the local church is to accept more help from the denomination, not less.

On giving, it was theorized that since giving was a combination of theological understanding and economic pragmatism, it would be beneficial for the church to work out programs "to help people with family goal setting and financial planning."

Denominations were reminded to re-examine what they mean by ecumenicity and to do more than focusing only on such structures.

Officials from the denominations sponsoring the study plan to conduct numerous meetings in the next three months for further analysis of the data findings. United Methodist officials will meet Feb. 28-29 in Dayton, Ohio.

A United Methodist Board of the Laity official termed the study "extremely valuable." Gordon Danielson, assistant general secretary, also said the study would probably induce changes in the Board of the Laity's stewardship literature and programming.

On the question of how favorably people appraised their church, ministers and laymen expressed belief that their denominations were important and deserved support.

Even when ministers and lay members disagree with some expenditures which national church leaders make with their contributions, the majority did not feel that withholding their money was the answer. Less than one fourth were willing to restrict their donations to the local level.

On the question of what is the major responsibility of the denomination, local church people unanimously agreed that it was to provide and train ministers. They listed the second most important task of the denomination as "providing mission support and outreach at home and abroad."

Functions not considered important for the local church are supporting minority groups, building low-cost housing, influencing legislation, and providing fellowship activities for members.

Findings of the study were based on a 200-page preliminary release. The complete publication is due in mid-1972.



Teacher and students alike were delighted when Bill Mason, 35, returned sooner than expected following a second kidney transplant operation. The student body at Del Norte High School in Albuquerque, N.Mex., and the couples' class at Christ United Methodist Church sponsored projects to help pay medical costs. After years of kidney trouble, veteran math teacher Mason first underwent surgery to receive a kidney from his brother, Major Eric Mason, given leave from Viet Nam to become the donor. But that kidney developed a blood clot and had to be removed. A second kidney was transplanted successfully from another brother, Navy pilot Ken Mason. Del Norte student Steve Klinksiek said, "It takes a great man to accept what we did and not think of it as merely charity; we wanted to do it because Mr. Mason is a great man." The father of four was given a surprise dinner party of spicy Mexican food, formerly forbidden him, on his recovery.

EVANGELICAL OFFICIAL SPEAKS OF SEPARATION

A director of United Methodism's unofficial evangelical organization generally known as the Good News movement recently told a conference of United Methodist missionaries that some evangelicals might feel "forced to think in terms of a separate sending board, separate recruitment, separate use of mission funds."

Asked whether there is hope of "holding together," Dr. David Seamands replied, "I don't know."

Dr. Seamands is pastor of the United Methodist congregation in Wilmore, Ky., and a former Methodist missionary to India. He is also a director of the Good News movement and spoke at the movement's second annual convocation in 1971.

Dr. Seamands stressed that sepa-

rateness is "furthest from what we evangelicals want," but he asserted that if present trends continue, the evangelical segment of the church may not have "much choice."

The minister said many evangelicals perceive an imbalance in the direction of missions toward a "humanistic, secularistic, universalistic" emphasis that they feel goes away from traditional scriptural bases for mission.

Dr. Seamands told the conference of missionaries and missions executives, "The fact you have invited me here to honestly and openly express deep concerns is a good sign."

In discussion following Dr. Seamands' address, missionaries and staff members said that most missionaries in the field and a large proportion of the overseas budget are committed to traditional ministries, including evangelism.

ELDERLY A-BOMB VICTIMS GET HIROSHIMA CENTER

Less than 30 minutes' drive from downtown Hiroshima stands a new nursing home for the elderly, built in an unprecedented joint effort by Japanese churches with some help from Americans.

Seireien, which means garden of the clear ringing bells, opened with 50 beds and is to be expanded to 150 beds.

Among survivors of the world's first atomic bomb blast are an estimated 500 elderly persons who need nursing home care. Officials of the sponsoring United Church of Christ (Kyodan) explained that it was primarily for those persons that the home was built.

United Methodist lay missionary Larry Thompson, who has done social work in Hiroshima since 1961, noted that Seireien is the first social service project initiated and completed by a national Japanese church organization. Japanese churches in two years contributed \$140,000 toward \$433,000 construction costs.

Credited with starting and advancing the project were two men, the Rev. Masahisa Suzuki, late moderator of the Kyodan, and his missionary associate, the Rev. Otis Bell, now a United Methodist pastor in Elyria, Ohio.

United Methodist gifts to Seireien went through the Board of Missions' World Division. The Kyodan is related to United Methodism and several other U.S. denominations.

The Japanese government will provide much of the estimated \$291,000 annual operating budget. Hiroshima itself has five public hospitals including a so-called A-bomb hospital, and 40 private clinics give free treatment to A-bomb sufferers.

Mr. Thompson attended dedication services for the new facility last fall. In a missionary newsletter he wrote of proceeding up Gokurakuji Mountain near Hiroshima and standing in a light rain in a rough open area near the building.

"It seemed as if this building before us had indeed sprung in some mysterious fashion from the hillside, and that over all there was indeed the clear and unmistakable ringing of the church bells of Japan and of brother and sister churches across the seas," he wrote.

BROADCAST STATIONS HIT BY 'SURVIVAL' CAMPAIGN

Survival was big on the nation's airwaves in January.

Or was it?

January was the target month for use of the *Survival in the '70s* radio and television spot announcements created largely by United Methodism's Division of Television, Radio, and Film Communication (TRAFCO) with assistance from its United Presbyterian counterpart agency.

It is too soon to know how much play the five television and four radio spots received on local stations, but an elaborate procedure

through December had introduced the spots to station officials and to churchmen around the country.

The sponsoring church agencies chose January as the preferred month for airing because public-service (free) time is usually greatest on the stations then. The spots are undated, however, and may be used indefinitely.

The television spots, shot in color with professional actors, use an advertising agency as their location. Advertising executives are shown trying to create an ad campaign not coincidentally entitled *Survival in the '70s*. One spot features reconciliation between two persons; another shows that sur-

vival depends on human beings needing each other, and a third emphasizes that loving is a "God act." The other two spots are shortened versions of the reconciliation and loving spots.

The radio spots consist of brief interviews with various unidentified persons on the question, "Who are you?" All use the audio-verité technique, and one overweaves voices into one another.

None of the spots, radio or television, carries a "tag"—an identification name or line at the end. Churchmen were advised by TRAFCO officials, however, that tag could be added locally if needed.

The radio spots are aimed at the youth and young adult market. TRAFCO spokesmen said, since that age bracket is the principal listening audience for radio. The *Survival* spots could be used as program material between records, they added.

All the *Survival* spots were based on responses fed to the sponsoring church agencies from 52 local church workshops [see *Survival in the '70s*, October, 1971, page 12]. Another series of local workshops this spring will feed ideas to the agencies for a second series of spots to be released in the fall.

TELEVISION TO SHOW CHURCHMEN'S FILM AWARDS

First winners of new national interreligious film awards will be revealed on an NBC television color special March 26.

Awards will be made by a committee formed recently by the Synagogue Council of America, U.S. Catholic Conference, and National Council of Churches. The committee has seven Protestants, seven Catholics, and four Jews.

Among Protestant members is the Rev. James Wall, contributing editor on films for *Together* and editor of *Christian Advocate*.

The committee is expected to honor up to two films in each of two categories, "general audience" and "mature audience," and to bestow a special award of merit to an individual or group.

This marks the first participation in national interreligious film awards by Jews.

UNITED METHODISTS IN THE NEWS

Dr. Arthur West, executive secretary of United Methodist Information, has been named one of seven advisers to the Office of Communication of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). He is the first non-Disciple on the panel.

Queen of the 1972 Tournament of Roses in Pasadena, Calif., was Miss Margo Lynn Johnson, member of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Arcadia, Calif.

Appointed a consultant in church relations by the National Retired Teachers Association and American Association of Retired Persons was the Rev. W. Randolph Thornton, a member of the South Indiana Conference. From 1952 to 1965 he was executive director of the Department of Administration and Leadership of the National Council of Churches.

Dr. Wesley M. Westerberg has announced his resignation as president of United Methodist-related Kendall College, Evanston, Ill., effective June 30, 1973.

A United Methodist will become children's editor of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. (Southern). Miss Lena L. Clausell has been director of education of First United Methodist Church in Belvedere, Ill., since 1970.

Thomas M. Berry, a member of the United Methodist Judicial Council, is scheduled to become mayor of Cincinnati, Ohio, a year from now in a unique arrangement that sees two men dividing the normal two-year term in the post. Mr. Berry will be the first black mayor of the city.

The Hon. Spessard L. Holland, former U.S. senator from Florida, was

named honorary chairman of sponsors of the Florida Conference's "Partners in Education," a campaign to raise capital funds for United Methodist-related Florida Southern College in Lakeland and Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach.

Dr. C. Orville Strohl, president of United Methodist-related Southwestern College in Winfield, Kans., for 18 years, has announced his resignation effective June 30, 1972.

Upon retiring next summer as episcopal head of the Atlanta Area, Bishop John Owen Smith will become the first "churchman in residence" at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga. The position was created to bring outstanding church leaders to campus for specified stays to offer courses and seminars in their fields.

Dr. Albert C. Outler, noted United Methodist ecumenist, has become the first non-Catholic president of the American Catholic Historical Association. The professor of historical theology at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, automatically succeeded to the presidency from his post of first vice-president to which he was elected in 1970.

DEATHS: Bishop Costen J. Harrell, 86, former head of the Charlotte Area. Elected to the episcopacy in 1944 and retired in 1956, he was known as an authority on church law.

Jane Merchant, poet and author. Bedridden by illness since age 12 and deaf several years, she had material published in many leading magazines, including *Together*. Her most recent work in this magazine was *Calendar of Haiku* published in the January, 1972, issue.



On the last Thursday of each month the community hall at Red Lion United Methodist Church in Bear, Del., is filled with women stuffing five-pound boxes to be sent to all Delaware men in Viet Nam. Project SOS (Serve Our Servicemen) is more than four years old. It began with a woman member of the host church but long ago became interdenominational. The nonprofit group raises funds through bake sales and it purchases most goods wholesale. Each package contains a one-pound tin of homemade cookies, most-wanted items such as stationery and gum, and, for Viet Nam's muggy climate, foam rubber insoles, foot powder, and wool socks. Each five-pound parcel costs \$1.90 to travel on space-available shipments.

NASHVILLE APPROVED FOR ARCHIVES CENTER

Unless the General Conference rules otherwise in April, United Methodism will have a new center for its archives in Nashville, Tenn. The Commission on Archives and History voted to consolidate present depositories at Lake Junaluska, N.C., and Dayton, Ohio, in space to be leased from the Board of Evangelism in Nashville.

Selection of Nashville culminated a three-year committee search which included 17 applications.

The FOCUS Is on Modeling, Moving On

One church agency in Seattle, Wash., practices a unique "give-away" philosophy. Right now it's involved in the area's most urgent "giveaway" of recent times.

The Fellowship of Christian Urban Service (FOCUS) began in 1966 as an outreach of three dying inner-city United Methodist churches. Today Capitol Hill, Beacon, and Grace Churches exist with small but vital congregations (100-150 members), according to FOCUS director the Rev. Harold Perry, ecumenical co-pastor of Capitol Hill Church.

Operating from its original storefront office in Seattle's inner city, FOCUS has a staff of about 10 people including two United Methodist pastors.

In an interview with *Together*, Mr. Perry described the program as a four-phase process: (1) research what's going on in the city, (2) build a model that responds to community needs, (3) implement the model, and (4) spin it off into the community where it can be maintained by residents—freeing FOCUS to move to something else.

One problem Seattle has always had, said the FOCUS director, is that "being tied to one industry is either boom or bust. When Boeing is good, things are very, very good, but now it's horrid." Over a two-year period Boeing's work force dropped from 102,000 to 36,000 and Seattle's unemployment rate soared to 16 percent, creating a "new poor"—middle class persons with little income.

"We knew people were going to be hungry," he continued. So FOCUS in cooperation with the Church Council of Greater Seattle and the Ecumenical Metropolitan Ministry (EMM) organized Neighbors in Need (NiN) more than a year ago. The volunteer program distributes food to 15,000 persons a week and in 1971 received and gave away some \$1.5 million worth of food.

EMM trains volunteers and the church council administers funds and provides linkage with 300 local churches supporting NiN. FOCUS, responsible for administration of NiN, developed the model—36 food banks in all parts of King County. Each is supported by an ecumenical cluster of churches and is open three days a week for three or four hours—until food runs out.

"It's been difficult to keep sup-

ply exceeding demand," Mr. Perry said. "Suburbs used to have excess food which they shared with places with higher demand, but now suburbs are drawing from the central supply. We're spending \$10,000 to \$12,000 per week supplementing food which is donated by farmers and churches."

One key to the program, the director stressed, is there is no test of need. "People can get food just because they are hungry, without a lot of red tape."

"We found a whole series of things wrong with the present system (welfare, food stamps): people are excluded from getting this help, they wait long periods of time, and the resources are not nearly adequate to help them survive." Thus NiN's major goal has been to "immediately expand resources that will help people during this time."

Mr. Perry explained that many people have just enough income or assets to disqualify them for welfare or food stamps.

"Our system does not provide for people who become unemployed in this way," complained the FOCUS director. "It was set up on the assumption of a booming economy—everyone can work if he wants to. Realistically, there is not a surplus of jobs for aeronautical engineers in any part of the country. Middle-class people are discovering what the poor have known for a long time: If you lack certain optional skills, as much as you want to work you may not be able to."

FOCUS, working with EMM and the church council, has shown how food can be distributed to hungry people. Now FOCUS has done its job and is moving away from the administration end, leaving NiN incorporated and under control of a community board.

During the last year FOCUS devoted 80 percent of its effort to Neighbors in Need, but director Perry said it now will concentrate on other programs: two 24-hour emergency survival centers, a community house, and others.

"We're entering a research phase exploring other problems," he said, "like how kids in the city can find extended family which may not be related, cooperative living arrangements, and how we can discover open space in the city where people can get away without driving 40 miles."

—Lynda Campo

Inflation Is a Christian Concern

By HOWARD M. LEHN

PRESIDENT NIXON has called upon the nation to join in a massive attack on inflation. Most of us hope it will be successful because inflation threatens both our national economy and our individual efforts to keep pace financially.

But inflation threatens more than our national economic equilibrium, more than the erosion of my own hoped-for pension plan. It also is a Christian concern because its burden falls most heavily upon those already in the least fortunate segment of our economy—the retired, the unemployed, the young who are entering the labor market, and the employed millions who do not have the bargaining muscle to demand and receive pay increases commensurate with the increased cost of living.

It is no coincidence that national concern about inflation comes at the same time we are hearing a great deal about the rapid growth of our welfare rolls. Inflation has forced many to seek some form of public assistance. Let me give a few hypothetical examples I have seen in my work as a public welfare officer.

Mr. A works at a service station for take-home pay of about \$70 a week. But he pays \$90 a month for the modest house he rents and utilities take another \$30. He tries to feed, clothe, and maintain his family on the remaining \$150, along with keeping up the car he has to have to get to work. Finding it impossible to make ends meet, he applies for food stamps and the government subsidizes his food budget for about \$50 a month.

Mr. B is employed by the city refuse department for \$2.60 an hour, but he and his wife and three teen-age children face an increasingly tight budget even with food stamps. Unexpected illness strikes and the prospect overwhelms him. He has known for a long time that the family should have medical insurance but he simply could not afford it. He sees no alternative but to apply at the welfare office for medical assistance.

Mr. C. is employed by a meat-packing plant earning \$2.75 an hour. The house he has been renting is sold so he must move. Rental houses are extremely scarce and their rents are much higher than he has been paying. Every house for sale is out of his financial reach. He learns of government-subsidized housing and is able to purchase a home with the government providing 40

percent of the amount he needs for monthly payments.

These three cases show that food stamps, medical assistance, and subsidized housing are sought by a large number of fully employed people as well as the unemployed, the unemployable, or those who avoid employment.

Inflation creates another problem, too. It adds to the number of unemployed. This was vividly illustrated by the announcement that the government of one large city was raising the pay of its employees but was cutting the size of its labor force by the same percentage. The Christian education department of one large denomination gave cost-of-living raises to its employees, then laid off a substantial number to stay within a shrinking budget.

Many companies have met rising costs by cutting payrolls to bare minimums, terminating the services of research workers, public relations personnel, and others. Many of these workers face really severe problems. No one is hiring people with their talents. Former teachers, who recently enjoyed a comfortable living, are among those applying for food stamps and medical assistance.

We hear about a revolt of taxpayers. Part of this can be attributed to resentment against being asked repeatedly to provide more tax money for the same services. But inflation makes it necessary to ask for more funds to keep the same program going. It also makes the funding of needed new services increasingly difficult—services which could meet a need as well as utilizing the skills of those who would like to work.

Why is the church not more concerned with inflation and its effects upon society? Why is it that the only times I hear inflation mentioned in church gatherings is when people are being exhorted to raise their pledges so that the program won't be curtailed? I suggest two reasons why the church is not more concerned.

First, every minister with whom I have talked about inflation has blamed it entirely upon the Viet Nam War and said that when we stop the war, we will end inflation. This is a convenient way to link two unpopular issues, but it is hardly supported by facts. Inflationary pressures run deeper and are independent of the Viet Nam problem.

The second reason is that the churches are led largely by people whose incomes have kept pace more or less with rising costs. Whatever may be said about the inadequacy of ministers' salaries, most of them have had annual increases and are driving better cars, living in better houses, and eating better food than they were a decade or two ago. Most of our influential laymen are from the vast middle class—professional men, teachers, union members, and businessmen who have usually been able to secure gains in income and have not felt inflation's real impact. The very substantial percentage of our population whose gains in income have been very small or nonexistent are not our church leaders.

It is time to ask who will pay the costs if we ask for a pay raise far beyond our productivity. Will it be those least able to afford it? The American people have a good record of responding to the call for fair play. The fight against inflation is a call to play fair with our hard-pressed low-income group. It is a Christian concern. □

The Trouble With Good News

What lies behind our appetite for bad news? Is not part of it the feeling that tragedy somehow brings us closer together, as common survivors in need of one another?

By MARTHA WHITMORE HICKMAN



WE SEEM to crave some sense of tragedy returned from or just barely averted. We like, for instance, to tell how "the plane that crashed took off just before the one I boarded." Or, better yet: "I was supposed to be on that flight, but at the last minute I had to change my reservations."

"The man next to me was hit by a falling brick" evokes some involuntary gratitude, some sense of special protection, much more than if it were a man 60 feet away on the other side of the crowd. Why? Do we feel a reprieve from some kind of "life guilt" if we come that close to terror and it does not strike? If we are

spared, does it mean that we really are worth sparing after all, that God is treating us with special favor?

Even when we know the face of one to whom disaster comes, his family, some good projects he was planning to work on tomorrow, our sorrow is still complicated by the sense of our own fortunate escape. When an athlete dies young, his marvelous body corrupted too soon, doesn't it somehow strengthen our own drive for life? Doesn't it reassure us who live that we are not so clumsy and ungainly after all?

The class beauty queen did not marry. The valedictorian ends up with a mediocre shoe-salesman job. Is our suppressed admiration for these unexpected equities our relief at having survived the competition in better shape than we expected, our jubilation at having a later word, so to speak? (Though we are wise enough to know it is not the last word, and that that word is one we ourselves will not hear.)

BUT what else lies behind our appetite for bad news? Is it not—to be a little more kindly to ourselves—that we also sense the power of tragedy to bring us closer to one another, as common survivors in need of one another?

Think of the faces we have seen—on television, in newspapers, in the crowds we have stood with on our own city greens—as we have gathered with terrible frequency to mourn together the violent deaths of some of our national heroes. The sophistication did not alienate, the beards and sandals did not offend, the gray-flannel suits were not “square,” the tears were not awkward and embarrassing.

As one commentator said as he watched the slow parade of tired and stricken people going into and coming out of a church on one of these occasions, “At a time like this how beautiful is every human face.” And we reach out for one another, through the resources of whatever faith is ours, for some positive answer to that question: If a man die, shall he live again?

Does it always take bad news to create solidarity? Does good news ever redeem us?

Some kinds of good news are our constant support, but we seldom think of them as being good news at

all. We expect that the sun will rise tomorrow, that we will not go blind tomorrow, that we will have food enough for tomorrow. Constant order—the order of days and seasons, of positive and negative numbers, of convex being the other side of concave, of a watershed as a meaningful phenomenon—is the good news. That we are able to take it for granted is part of its fact.

Maybe once, when we were small, it startled us with its goodness. I remember overhearing my young son say to his father, “Why doesn't everybody thank God for the world? They know they're on it, don't they?” Maybe it was this kind of daily assumed good news of which Moses was reminding his fellow wanderers in the desert when he said, while describing the various more dramatic ways in which God had preserved them, “Your clothing did not wear out upon you, and your foot did not swell, these 40 years.”

To put it another way, when is good news news? When does it disturb our various expectations of life enough that it is news at all? Maybe it is truly good news when it has narrowly averted disorder and destruction, or come through them into order and new life. Those who have had some narrow brush with death are grateful for the gifts of life. Life is news to them. But there are such times for us all.

Good news is news when the car skids on ice and spins off the road and we are not hurt, or when an

airplane that crashes lands in a snow so deep (previously bemoaned by the city street-cleaning department) that no one is killed.

Good news is news when Russian and American ships steam toward each other in the Cuban sea, and they do not fire on each other, and we go to bed thankful for even a relative and unstable peace.

Good news is news when our astronauts return from their moon voyage—not only because of the triumph of adventure and imagination and technology but because they might not have come back.

Good news is news when a child has been trapped in a well for four days, and we all watch the digging, the parallel shafts, and the strained faces of the parents, and the dirt-smearred bearded faces of the hundreds of volunteer rescuers who have come to help, and we look at our own children with gratitude and vicarious terror—and then, and then—the child is reached and is safe and well, and we stand as a country of grateful parents around that shaft and mound of dirt and burrowing equipment, and we alternately weep and dance for joy. It is, we say, almost too good to be true.

And then maybe some of the people who have been trying to explain about love and meaning and good news and God will join in the dance for joy, and in their eyes will be a look that says, “That's it! That's what I was trying to tell you!” Maybe then we shall know who we are. □

The Soul of Generosity

MATTHEW
20:12

Remember
that the eleventh-hour workers
received the same wages
as the full-time workers.
Naturally the latter complained:
“These last worked only one hour,
and you have made them equal to us
who have borne the burden of the day
and the scorching heat.”
And what should God do
with us last-minute Christians?
Offer half a forgiveness
or two weeks in heaven?

—Robert Hale

I WISH THE CHURCHES WOULD MIND THEIR OWN BUSINESS

By DAVID H. C. READ

SOMETHING peculiar has been happening in the religious life of this country in the last ten years.

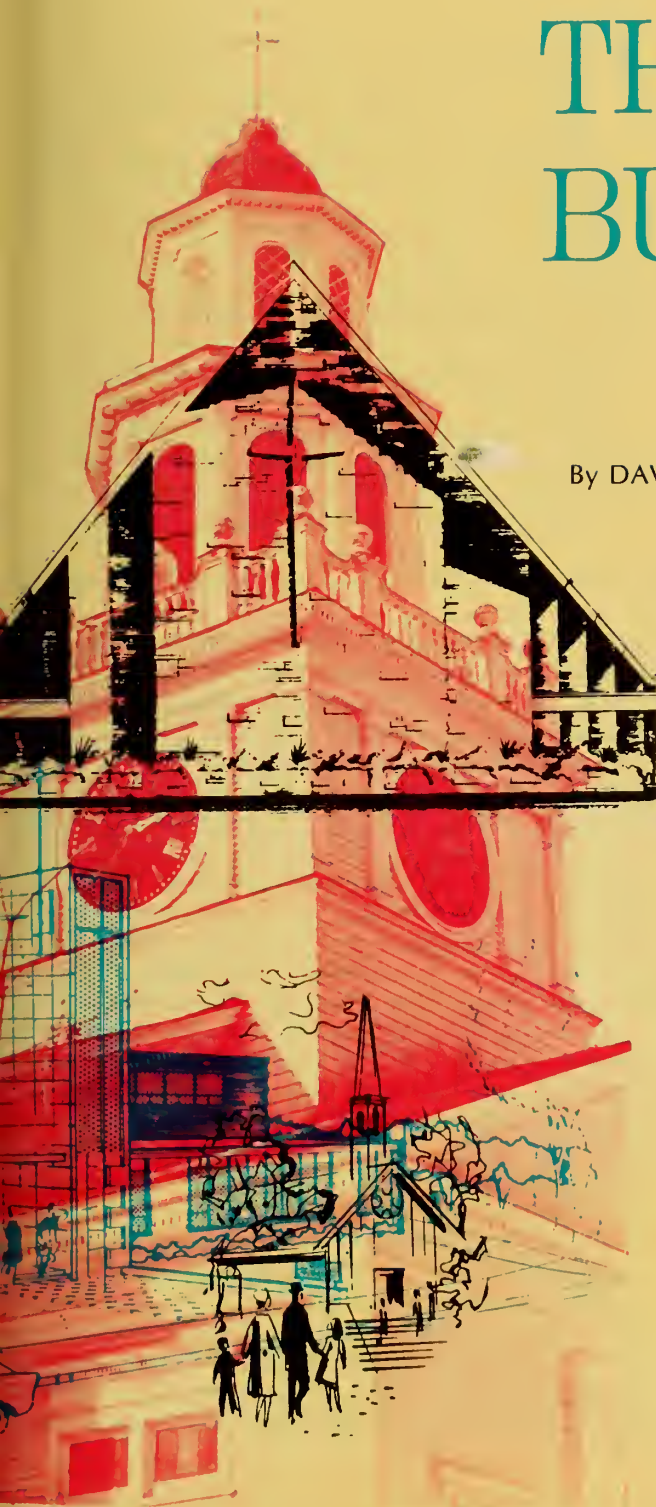
What I have in mind is the curious paradox that while this has been a period of more and more activity for the churches in the social and political life of the nation, the polls show that most citizens think that their influence has been less and less.

Just when churches have been intensely busy with all the questions that agitate the nation—race, peace, poverty, justice, and the like—people have been quietly deciding that they are having little effect. It is as though the more the church trumpets its concern the less the nation feels like paying attention.

Of course, it is extraordinarily difficult to gauge the impact of the church on any nation at any time. Its influence is not necessarily exerted through public pronouncements or pressure groups. The church is in action wherever a Christian man or woman is expressing an opinion, upholding an ideal, or working unobtrusively for a good cause. Yet it does seem at the moment as though many have decided that, in spite of its activism, or perhaps because of it, the institutional church is a declining power in the land.

This lies behind the remark that can be overheard in

I Wish the Churches Would Mind Their Own Business is taken from *Overheard* (Abingdon, \$1.95, paper) by the Rev. David H. C. Read. Reprinted by permission of Abingdon Press.—Your Editors



All the Church Does Is Ask for Money!

By GEORGE M. RICKER

"All the church does is ask for money."

Week after week church sanctuaries are open for people to gather and worship. These gatherings are keeping alive a Christian understanding of life and reminding the world of a spirit dimension that is not subject to sight and measurement.

"All the church does is ask for money."

A couple has made a decision to be married. Their relationship, so they feel, is more than a legal contract. Somehow something more than a civil ceremony is called for.

The church has a service and a servant helping engaged couples to explore the deeper elements in their future relationship.

"All the church does is ask for money."

A new life is born into a home. The sense of awesome responsibility almost overwhelms the parents. What does it mean to bring a new life into being? *He has a place in life, the dignity of being a child of God. The church has a service that initiates him into this understanding of life.*

"All the church does is ask for money."

He is sick, very sick. Surgery is the only chance for saving his life. The family gathers and waits. Consciously or unconsciously, they want some word of comfort, some help to find courage to face what is. *A pastor is available at any hour to be a presence in the midst of sickness and suffering.*

many quarters today: "I wish the churches would mind their own business." Those who express this opinion are telling us that the real business of the church is to convert men and women to Christianity and to nourish them in it. Then, if this were done effectively, the church would have a far greater influence on the nation than it does by joining in demonstrations, issuing pronouncements, and dabbling in politics, local, national, or international. Every time the mass media report the participation of clergy in a demonstration, or the arrest of a minister or priest, or a political pronouncement by a church council, I can almost overhear the grunts rising from a thousand breakfast tables: "I wish the churches would mind their own business."

Before we examine the validity of this point of view, I would remark that this is not the only opinion I overhear on this subject. Almost as often you can hear someone saying, "Why doesn't the church give a lead?" or "Why isn't the church more relevant to the real issues of today?" At the close of a meeting I once asked a group of students whether they thought the church should become more involved or less involved in social and political affairs. And about 50 percent cried "More!" while the other 50 percent cried "Less!" There is a deep division in the nation and the church on this matter that could have serious consequences unless each side really tries to understand what the other is saying. "Give a

lead" or "Mind your own business." These are the two denominations that threaten to come into being, for this division goes much deeper than the matters that separated us along the old denominational lines.

Let me try to listen hard to what is being said by those who are alarmed, distressed, or even infuriated by the church's intrusion into the social and political arena. The church's business, they would say, is to make Christians, not to tell me how to vote or to use my money for projects that seem to me to have little to do with the spreading of the gospel. And they would point out that, while activist organizations abound today and much attention is being given to the problems of the secular world, very little is being done to train people in prayer, Bible reading, the spread of the gospel, and preparation for the world to come. The common way to put it, both inside and outside the church, is that the first concern of the church is with the "spiritual" and not the material.

A recent and unexpected recruit to this position is Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge, the English essayist and critic. In a scathing attack on the activism of the modern churches he wrote recently:

"It is natural enough, I suppose, that the churches in their final decrepitude should thus concentrate on their social, and ignore their spiritual, responsibilities. Thereby they fall in with the prevailing temper of the age: every-

"All the church does is ask for money."

They have had some rough years together. Arguments—romantic illusions dashed. Accusations—a growing bitterness. What shall they do? As a last resort they decide to turn to a third party. Who? *Pastors serve as postmarital as well as premarital counselors. They give no guarantees, but again and again they help people find their own hidden resources.*

"All the church does is ask for money."

A young girl is pregnant outside of marriage. Children from a broken home are tossed between relatives and friends until "something" is worked out. What can we do?

The church has institutions to serve these needs. A Christian atmosphere of love and concern is provided, a ministry of helpfulness.

"All the church does is ask for money."

Our school years are meaningful times—expanding horizons, new ideas, developing skills. Then school comes to an end and we settle down to a routine life. We wake one day with the awareness that our school training failed to become a continuing process. The "what" and the "how" were not joined to a "why."

The church offers study programs to help alert people to the deeper issues of life. The church seeks to train the whole man by putting his life work, family, and other relationships into a larger context.

"All the church does is ask for money."

A loved one dies. The funeral director is helpful, but our need is deeper than he can meet.

A pastor is available; a church sanctuary can be provided. The comfort and presence of God in the midst of death is witnessed to.

"All the church does is ask for money."

People live in this world steeped in filth and ignorance. They have little incentive to improve themselves until they see the example of one who comes into their midst and serves.

Christian missionaries are found at home and abroad bearing witness in word and deed to the love that is at the heart of life.

"All the church does is ask for money."

The church is not an institution or institutions—it has institutions. The church is people, a servant people who live in faith, hope, and love, who practice mercy, compassion, and justice.

Who can measure what is happening as a result of the lives and ministries of such a people?

"All the church does is ask for money."

And still if "church" comes up in a conversation, someone will grumble and protest because "all the church does is ask for money."

And Still You Hear It . . .



one can understand the merit of giving a starving man food, or of championing the victims of napalm or apartheid, but the very language of mysticism or transcendentalism has ceased to be comprehensible . . . their better world promotion has the advantage of being a soft sell . . . even the saints have found Christian virtue hard to practice, but any tousled student can acquire a glow of righteousness by pouring a bucket of paint over some visiting speaker from the U.S. Embassy or South Africa House." (You can understand how this kind of remark makes Muggeridge an exciting if not always a popular visitor to British campuses!)

The point that is being made here seems to me worth listening to, whether we fully agree or not. There are all too evident signs of Christians capitulating to our secular culture and rejecting our heritage of faith in the unseen world. Not only do we have an emphasis today on the social and material consequences of our faith, but the faith itself is sometimes secularized. Put more simply this means that the man who says, "My belief in God can only be expressed in social action," may soon go on to deny that he has any real God to believe in. It may be that some plunge into social action because they have given up the struggle to find a faith that really grips their minds and wills.

I suppose what is also in the minds of those who accuse the church of "meddling" is the apparent readi-

ness of assemblies and councils to issue statements about matters beyond their technical competence or delicate political questions on which men of Christian goodwill are by no means agreed. I suppose the popular idea is that a group of clerics gather in some incense-filled room, concocting pronouncements out of a woolly idealism that is remote from the hard facts of life. Having occasionally sat on such committees, I must report that this picture is a caricature. Usually great care is taken to have expert laymen as members as well as ministers and normally varying political points of view are represented. Yet I must confess that in recent years church bodies have seemed to me a little too ready to make public statements on thorny questions that require much thought and expertise, and on certain political matters to come down predictably on one side of the fence.

When, however, I overhear that the church should mind its own business, obviously more is being said than that the church should be careful in its pronouncements on social and political questions and less given to a militant activism. We are being told that the church should not be involved in such things at all. Suppose I were to ask: "Just what is the church's business?" The reply would probably be, "To preach the gospel and minister to our souls." The church is doing its own thing, in other words, if it confines itself to worship, evangelism, and the promotion of personal piety. Everything else

—war, poverty, race, birth control, abortion, housing, matters of government—should be left to the individual conscience of the believer.

This sounds quite a reasonable proposition, until we begin to reflect a little on recent history. We shall then discover that this conception of the church's business is the one held by totalitarian powers. Pastor [Martin] Niemöller once told me of an interview he had with Hitler who raved against the church's interference in social and political matters. "You can deal with heaven," he said. "The German people on earth belong to me."

This is also the communist position. Churches in the Soviet orbit are normally free to conduct worship as they please, but there is severe restriction on any social activity, and pronouncements affecting state policy are out of the question, unless they happen to coincide with the party line. We cannot blame Christians in Germany for acquiescing in the Nazi takeover, if we believe that the church should be entirely unconcerned with affairs of state. The antinazi Confessional Church in Germany was not primarily concerned with political action, but they saw the implications of some Nazi policies and were bold enough to condemn them openly. Would anyone want to say now that a church that condemned anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany was not minding its own business and should have kept quiet?

You see, it is not possible to draw a firm line and say, "The church's business ends here." For me there is no question about our primary duty to preach the gospel and offer worship to almighty God. If that is not central then the church might as well go out of business altogether for many of the other things could be better done by secular agencies. But preaching the gospel is not something that concerns only the soul of man. Jesus Christ came in the flesh, and he was concerned with every aspect of man's life, physical as well as spiritual. And worship is not something that happens in a vacuum. It is an offering of the total life of men and women to God in Christ. If it is the church's business to bring to men and women the Word of God, would it not also be its business to try to feed them if they were starving? And if, as most would admit, we have this duty of care for their bodies, does this not also extend to the body politic where decisions are made affecting human welfare? There is a big difference between political action for its own sake and political action taken for the sake of the gospel.

The younger generation today is very skeptical about an institution that proclaims the validity and necessity of Christian love but refuses to say anything or do anything about social conditions that are a denial of that love. They may be often reckless in their demands, unfair in their criticism, and unthinking in their demands on the church, but we must remember how difficult it is for them to believe that the church means business in this question of Christian love if we seem to care little about such matters as justice, economic opportunity, housing, or racial prejudice.

The Hebrew prophets were not slow to denounce a purely "spiritual" worship that neglected the physical problems on the church's doorstep. "Hear this word of the Lord," says Amos, "Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." In modern terms that would mean:

"I don't want to hear your lovely hymns or glorious pipe organs unless you are concerned with justice and fair play in the community."

It would be tragic if the rift in the church between what are called "activists" and "pietists" got any wider. For surely any true follower of Christ must see that an extreme position on this matter will betray the gospel. If being an "activist" means that I neglect my prayers, minimize my worship, and cease to believe in the eternal dimension, then I have parted company with the New Testament altogether.

On the other hand, if being a pietist means that I think of the gospel as a purely spiritual transaction between my soul and God with no obligations on my conduct as a citizen, then this is equally a betrayal of the message of Christ. Similarly, if the church were to turn away from its worship and evangelism and devote itself entirely to involvement in the social and political questions of the day, it would cease to be the church of Jesus Christ, while, if it completely rejected all such involvement it would be disobedient to its Lord, and in effect denying the message of the Incarnation—that the Word was made flesh.

So I would want to plead for mutual understanding. To those who are impatient with the reluctance of our churches to identify themselves at once with every cause that seems to represent peace, justice, and social betterment, I would say, "All right. We have been often too slow and often too timid; but at times we may have also been too fast and too bold. How many today would say without hesitation that those churches in the thirties who identified themselves with prohibition and pacifism were right? And, most important of all, how can the churches have any real impact on social conditions if we lose the one thing that is our unique motivation, the reconciling gospel of Jesus Christ?"

To those who are aghast at what looks to them like a disastrous swing away from the church's main business to a meddling with mundane affairs, I would say, "Your word of warning is needed in these days of increasing secularism and disbelief in the central truths of the gospel; but surely you don't mean that a church should have no concern about, for instance, the ghettos of our cities and what causes them, the proportion of public money spent on armaments, or the rights and wrongs of birth control and abortion? Surely you don't mean that the church should keep silent if any power should seem to be threatening our human liberties or refuse to comment on trends that threaten the moral fiber of the nation?"

There is surely a meeting ground for Christians of different temperaments here, and the church should be a place where we can speak of these things to one another in love. Let's agree that the church should mind its own business, but the church's business is both narrow and wide. It is narrow as it concentrates on that commitment to Christ that leads to life eternal; it is wide enough to cover, in Christ's name, the whole area of our mortal life. □



Traitorous Hands

BY EILEEN ALWOOD

WELL, I had done it. I had *really* done it. With eight words I had assured myself of two minutes of uncertainty and frustration followed by a half hour of self-reproach. I had simply said: "Shall we have scrambled-egg sandwiches for lunch?"

Realizing too late what I had done, I tried to head it off, but as sure as mothers will goof, my five-year-old daughter would and did answer: "Can I crack the eggs?"

I groaned inwardly. Oh, no! Please, not an egg! Peel a potato, even fill the sugar bowl, but not an egg! But providence was on her side. Not 15 minutes earlier I had read an article on the dangers of destroying a child's self-confidence. I couldn't refuse.

While I was struggling to get the word "yes" past my lips, she confidently whipped over to the refrigerator and returned with two eggs. What happened next would have discouraged a child with less strength of purpose. The instructions rolled from my tongue like water from a faucet: "Wash your hands. Don't put the eggs on the counter, they'll fall on the floor. Get a bowl."

This wasn't her first attempt, but so far she had not "landed" an egg safely. Sometimes I would watch the entire agonizing procedure but would find it physically impossible to keep my traitorous hands away from the vicinity of the egg, if not actually touching it. At other times I would turn my back and wait to hear her thumb burst forcefully through the shell. This time, I decided, I wouldn't look. I handed her an egg.

I heard the crack against the side of the bowl and waited in suspense. Then came a crunch as her thumb punched through the shell, and I heard her gasp. Turning, I saw that only half the egg had landed in the bowl.

As she washed her hands and I blotted the spilled egg with paper towels she comforted herself: "The next one I'll do better, won't I?" I pretended I didn't hear, and quickly, before she realized what I was doing, cracked the second egg on the edge of the bowl. But before I could carry through, she was there beside me, and I saw the hope go out of her face. I placed her hands on the egg and with mine upon them showed her again how to pull gently. Together we guided the egg safely into the bowl. She said quietly: "That time I did it like a lady." But the animation was gone. It was not the same.

I had had the uncertainty and frustration. Now the self-reproach took over.

I realized that I was not the only one who had been apprehensive. And though I hadn't raged and stamped, I hadn't encouraged, either. I had saved my counter from a second mess, and perhaps my precious floor—but at what cost? Life would hold many disappointments for her, but such a little thing that had been looked upon with such high hopes shouldn't have turned out to be such a miserable failure in her own home.

We are going to have scrambled-egg sandwiches for lunch again tomorrow. I am going to bury my hands deep in the pockets of my apron. She's going to crack the eggs, pull them apart, and beat them—all by herself. No instructions. No fluttering hands. And what's more I'm going to tell her: "Just a few more inches to grow and you can cook them, too."

In the years to come she may or may not recall the specific day that she "did it like a lady," but I will always remember it as the day I decided that my hands would create no future generation gap in our family. □

Mortal man, it is said, is the only animal who smiles and has a sense of humor. But, this author insists—

God Also Laughs

By PHILIP CLARK

SOME BELIEVERS are going to be shocked by my suggestion that their God of wrath could possibly have a sense of humor as he deals with his errant children. Let them be shocked. I know from personal experience that God does enjoy a joke. But more of that later.

First, let's take some rather persuasive biblical proofs. We're told that God made man "in his own image." This has to work both ways. We can argue backward from man's better attributes to those of God.

Now, good or bad, man does have a sense of humor—sometimes perverse, far more often a badge of courage, or in defiance of fate. Take, for example, the way the people of Maine describe their climate. They call it "10 months winter and 2 months durn poor sleddin'."

Here in the mountains of western North Carolina, a friend of mine was driving too fast in dense fog and smacked into a gasoline truck, shearing off the petcocks on the rear. As gasoline spurted onto the pavement, the driver got out and surveyed the damage. "Look, mister," he said finally, "next time you want some gas, why don't you back up to it?"

Man, with all his orneriness, needs to be able to laugh at himself, to make a jest of his predicaments.

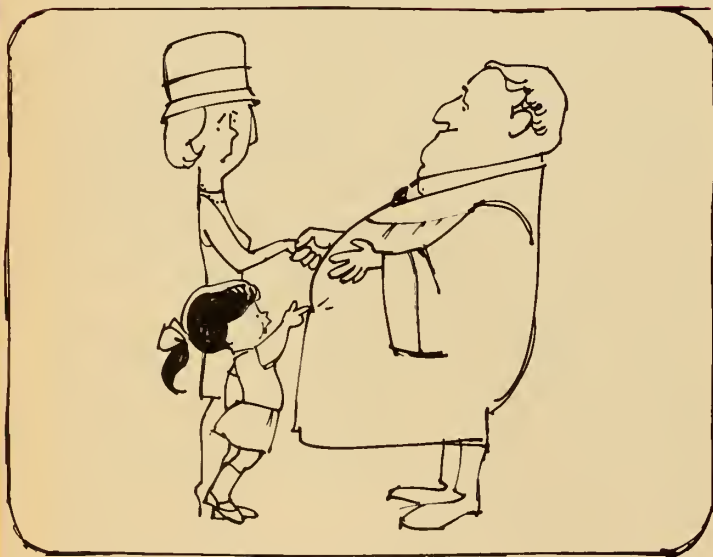
Man is a sinner streaked with divinity. The most divine of those streakings is his religion. It can be argued, though, that the next most divine streak is his humor. Religious man has always dared to make jokes about celestial things. This does not prove him irreverent—only that the infinite is so awesome that he must, from time to time, relieve its contemplation with a jest.

How many jokes have there been about timorous or too-confident souls knocking at St. Peter's gate? Sometimes man even dares to admonish God. It is as if he knows that when he comes with a jest on his lips, he won't be held to strictest account.

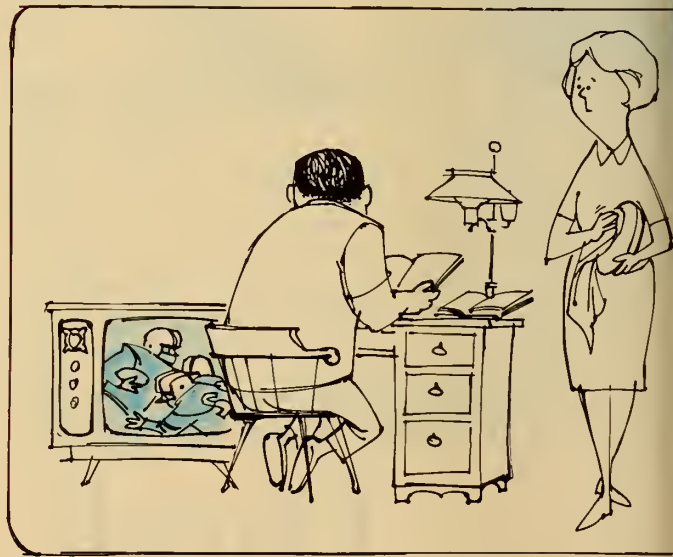
There was, for example, the supermarket advertising manager who knelt to pray:

"Dear Lord, the special for today is repentance."

Cartoons by Paul R. Behrens



"Are you filled with the Holy Spirit?"



"This church-school teacher's book sure is tough to understand."

Or the "predestined" Presbyterian who fell down the steps and broke his leg. When the neighbors ran to pick him up, he said, "Thank God, that's over with!"

Then there was the GI who was wounded in Viet Nam. When he came to, the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish chaplains were all sitting around his cot. "Good God," the GI murmured. "Three Holy Joes! I must be zapped for sure." The Catholic padre assured him, "No, my son, you're going to be all right. It's just that when a casualty is named Patrick Wesley Cohen, *nobody* gets a head start."

The first time that joke was told was in 47 B.C., and the GI was named Cassius Mordecai Mithras.

Or take the man who had a terrible run of hard luck. He couldn't pay his debts, the mortgage was six months overdue, and the sheriff had arrived to put him out on the street. The man got on his knees and prayed, "Dear Lord, thou art merciful . . . I have tried to be a true believer. Now I've come to the end of the road. If thou wilt only spare me now, I will be thy faithful servant all my life."

As he stopped praying, the postman brought him a letter saying a long-lost uncle had died and left him a small fortune. He lost no time getting on his knees again. "Lord, thou hast compassion in the midst of woe and tribulation. But, Lord, thou rannest it awful close!"

A primary church-school teacher, telling her young charges about the Pharisees, recounted the pharisaical pride, their ostentatious praying in public, their standing around the street corners in long robes, their seeking chief places at feasts. "And, children," the teacher concluded, "aren't we glad that we aren't like those *awful* people!"

Our joking about religion shows there must be humor on high. If not, we would not dare do it. But this is only circumstantial evidence. It's possible for one to have more certain proof that God deals with us in humor as well as in love and sternness. I know this because God played a wonderful joke on me.

As a child I had a religious upbringing until I was seven years old. Then, because of family fulminations against organized religion, I was quite literally kidnaped into agnosticism, too young to protest even if I had wanted to.

I spent the next 30 years firmly believing I was an agnostic. I didn't presume to believe, as the atheists do, that there is not a God. I just believed that finite human reason can't prove his existence. Therefore, worship was pointless.

Then, as my children began approaching school age, a doubt crept in. I reasoned that it was all right for me to reject religion; it was a free choice; I was a free person. But I began arguing with myself that I wasn't giving my children a free choice. They should have the privilege of making up their own minds, and they could do that only if they freely experienced religion as well as my non-religion.

So, generously, I condescended to join a church. I accompanied my family to services. (Staying at home while my family went to church school and church would have been undue pressure by example.) I did this, be it noted, as a matter of pure reason and paternal fairness.

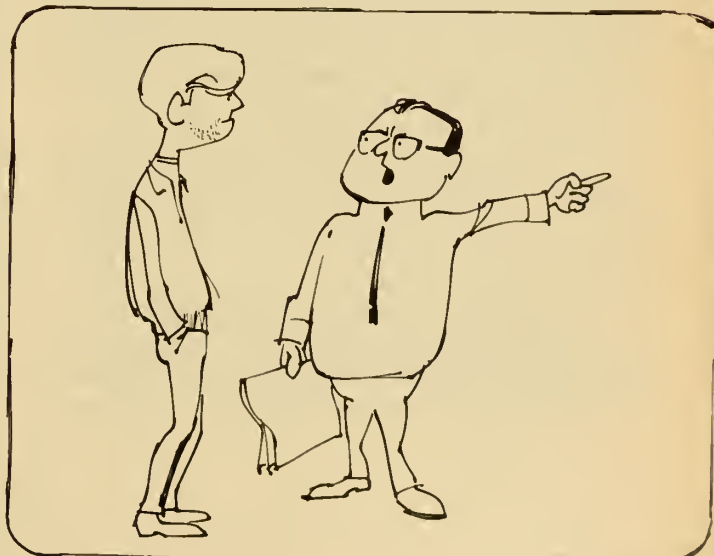
Then something odd happened. I began to enjoy the Sunday-morning service. Parts of the liturgy had powerful and remembered emotional effects on me. I started going to church school. And then it dawned on me that after all those wandering years I still believed in God.

Please mark the beauty of the joke God had played on me. I didn't present myself in church because *I* needed any of the blessings that might be found there. It wasn't *I* who needed the fatherhood of God, salvation through Jesus Christ, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, or the warm, supporting fellowship of a company of believers. I hadn't hungered for any of those things, but possibly my children might. Not Philip Clark, you understand. Just maybe his children.

Somewhere in heaven they're still laughing over that one. □



"Do you suppose God really created us in his own image?"



"I'm quite aware that Jesus wore a beard, but he wasn't asking to borrow my car."

Church Drama: Who Uses It?

By MARTHA A. LANE

EVERYONE loves a show. Ed Sullivan knew it and made a career out of proving it. So did P. T. Barnum. The church knew it way back in the Middle Ages when it used colorful morality plays to communicate traditions of the faith to its people.

There have been numerous drama workshops, experimental worship services, and lots of talk about "new images in keeping with new thoughts, awareness, experience, and insight," and so on. Yet the church's current use of drama generally seems little more widespread or exciting than it was five or ten years ago.

This is not to say that drama is useless in the modern church. Rather, it suggests that drama is often unused, misused, or uncreatively used in the local church. There are always exceptions, of course.

Studying the present state of drama in local United Methodist churches, *Together* found it used in four basic ways: as worship, as an educational tool, as recreation, and as outreach or witness to the faith. The methods most commonly employed—and with what results—follow.

Drama as Dialogue

The most effective use of drama today—and not necessarily in the church building itself—seems to be in informal ways, where scenery and costumes are left to the audience's imagination. The purpose of this type of drama is dialogue, an exchange of ideas and opinions. Episcopal priest Malcolm Boyd's reading of his own works and other material in nightclubs was a form of this. So are the playlets performed in many coffeehouses.

In church, informal drama can mean dialogue sermons and readings as an integral part of the worship service, role-playing, discussion-starter games, and storytelling for classes, study groups, workshops, and retreats.

Church and Community Theaters

Too frequently a congregation's attempts at drama follow this pattern: A minister who is particularly interested in drama joins the church staff.

He assembles a group and they start producing. Then, just when they are getting experience enough to produce meaningful performances, the minister receives a new assignment. When he leaves, the group disbands.

Not so with Winfield United Methodist Church of Little Rock, Ark. Ministers have come and gone but the Winfield Players (formerly the Curtain Club) continue. This is their 33rd year, and the current ecumenical membership of 75 represents all ages.

The group's aim is "to give fuller expression to the biblical witness and to the human condition to which it is addressed." They do it largely through formal drama, performing in many churches and





Chancel drama takes many forms. The Last Supper highlights Maundy Thursday services at Shaw Avenue Church in St. Louis, Mo. Monologist Jim Harnish presents a contemporary reading of Macbeth at Trinity Hill Church, Lexington, Ky.



schools throughout Arkansas. The group usually charges admission or receives an offering at performances, but when necessary the Little Rock church helps with finances.

Productions, all chosen for their ability to communicate the gospel, have included *J.B.*; *Between Two Thieves*; *For Heaven's Sake!*; *Like It Is!*; *A Majority of One*; *Our Town*; and *The Miracle Worker*.

Jefferson Avenue United Methodist Church in Saginaw, Mich., is another church which has used drama consistently for the past three decades. Its ecumenical, self-supporting Jefferson Avenue Drama Group has done a variety of things, from Leonard Wibberley's *The Mouse That Roared* to *No Exit* by existen-

tialist Jean-Paul Sartre. A discussion period followed the latter offering. The group has mixed biblical costuming with modern dress, to indicate the two roles most individuals tend to play in their lives.

"It has become more difficult to cast and present a play in recent years because of changes in lifestyles and in the increased variety of activities available to church family groups," the Saginaw thespians have found.

Five years ago young adults at United Methodist Church of the Redeemer in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, were trying to raise money for a cooperative nursery school. They decided to put on a play, and *Babes in Toyland* brought in the needed money. It also pinpointed the need and desire for a community theater opportunity.

Two groups—Redeemer Community Theatre, for adults, and Redeemer Youth Theatre—consequently were born in the church and continue to serve both church and community. Florence Mary Kennedy, of nearby University Heights, gives us this firsthand description of them:

"Redeemer Youth Theatre began as part of the church's youth program, but its doors welcome all interested youngsters. Some of its 1970 productions were *The Hobbit*, presented by the older youth; *Thumbelina*, by the youngest members; and *Wizard of Oz*, featuring everyone.

"Between 80 and 100 young people, 4 to 16 years, are involved. They come from miles around. Plans are being made to enable inner-city children to participate in the theater, too. Of course many interested adults are needed. Volunteers from both church and community have included musicians, dancers, artists, and actors, including some from theaters in the Greater Cleveland area who have conducted classes for the young players.

"Membership changes from production to production in the adult theater group, but about 50 are usually involved at any given time. No dues or salaries are paid by either group. Money comes from ticket sales and fund-raising dinners. Both groups turn 20 percent of their profits over to the church to pay for use of rooms and equipment."

Mrs. Kennedy asked Redeemer's pastor, the Rev. James Skinner, what advice he has for congregations considering starting a community theater. He mentioned two things:

"Leaders must be committed and energetic. Facilities of the church must be open to the community. While the smallest facility can work wonders of fellowship and creative expression if it is readily available, the largest facility is as useless as stored luggage if its doors are locked to the community."

What do the groups mean to those involved? For



Workshops are a good way to learn how drama can be used by churches. At last summer's Midwest Council for Drama and Other Arts gathering, participants studied graphic arts, music, movement, and verbal skills. This is a session on movement.



At a puppetry workshop in Nashville, Jerry Harnett was one of several professionals to lead interest groups. The popularity of puppetry has spurred the Division of Curriculum Resources to produce a puppet kit for kindergarten use.

one thing group members from the Church of the Redeemer have used drama to improve and enhance worship services. And theater meets people's needs for fellowship and working together. A 13-year-old actor was more specific: "I commit myself to do the best I know how, even if my role or assignment is minor. When I can push down the feeling that I'm capable of a much more important part, I believe I'm learning to share."

Another community theater has been provided by Grace United Methodist Church in Wilmington, Del., because "in all ages and cultures, religion has been a fountainhead for the arts. Some of the more meaningful and profound expressions of creativity . . . have found their roots in religious expression. This relationship needs to be rediscovered and restored in our 20th century."

The congregation converted a large room into the Upper Room, a center for the performing and creative arts, equipping it with the necessary stage and lighting facilities. Those who use the center are asked only to donate funds for needed maintenance and production costs. A community theater group stages two major shows a year in the theater. The church has used it for concerts, youth fellowship activities, plays, and other events.

Taking to the Streets

In Paterson, N.J., The United Methodist Church has a special interest in street theater, a currently popular form of drama. Northern New Jersey Conference provided the seed money and entrusted the project to Mr. and Mrs. Howard Sterling in 1969. The couple had been active in drama for a number of years and had done specialized study in the field at Drew University Theological School.

"Street theater is, simply, theater done in the streets," Mr. Sterling explains. "That means that it is a highly mobile theater that requires only actors and an audience. It can be political, but that is usually referred to as guerrilla theater. It can be educational. But most important, it can carry an air of celebration. We wanted to insert some of that celebration into the Paterson ghetto, hoping to make the signs of a new life more visible to the community."

The street theater dramatizes needs of the community. It also celebrates any successes the community experiences.

"An example of dramatizing a need would be a half-hour play entitled *Don't Hide Your Lamp Under a Bushel*, played in a neighborhood where lights are needed," Mr. Sterling says. "The play would be written by its cast and certainly wouldn't deal just with the need for a light, but would speak about life in light and in darkness. The play would be given in perhaps ten different poorly lit neighbor-



There are four basic types of puppets. Hand puppets, such as the koala held by Nashville puppeteer Tom Tichenor (right), usually are hollow and slip over the hand. Marionettes (pictured on preceding page) are animated by strings or wires. Rod puppets, like this boy's dog, are supported by rods of wood or steel. Shadow puppets, usually of metal or cardboard, seem to be least popular.

hoods. A play of this sort is significant only if it deals with a real problem," he believes.

Participants in the theater have included high-school-age Neighborhood Youth Corps workers, community children, and adults from Paterson and suburbs. Street-theater projects have included puppet shows for libraries, the Young Women's Christian Association, and preschools; an Easter play for a convent; a puppet show on rat control seen by 3,000 children throughout the city; a play about a

local family-counseling service, performed in a federal housing project; and many others.

The group also spawned a community theater known as the Paterson People, which has a membership of 70.

Help From the Outside

Churches which feel unable to produce their own drama can invite outside groups to come to them. Many colleges and seminaries have traveling groups

available for booking at rates most churches can afford.

The Saint Andrew Players, the touring company of Dramatic Ministries at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky., is an example. Dramatic Ministries was begun in 1969 by several United Methodist students. Its goal is to use only the best contemporary or classical drama to proclaim how some specific aspect of the gospel relates to human life. The group's 1971-72 season features Jean Anouilh's *Becket* and *The Sound and the Fury*, a contemporary interpretation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Both presentations are suitable for schools, churches, and retreats.

Many West Coast congregations are familiar with MASC—Methodist Actors Serving the Church. (MASC now is ecumenical, but retains the old name.) The Sacramento-based group of several dozen, all volunteers except for the director, puts on about 150 performances a year (26 during Lent last year alone). Although Sunday-morning and evening sanctuary performances dominate MASC's schedule, MASCers have appeared in parks, prisons, at the state fair, and in other settings. The group uses religious drama, interpretive dance, musicals, and contemporary plays to present a Christian message. MASC also sponsors a drama camp each summer.

MASC is "spiritually but not financially" supported by its annual conference. Freewill offerings and donations from interested friends keep it on the road.

Don't Discount Puppets

Puppets and religion have been bed partners since almost before there were beds. Idols of Egyptian, Grecian, Roman, and Indian gods were animated for dramatic effect. Japanese puppets represented supernatural forces in religious drama. Chinese shadow puppets were frequently part of religious ceremonies.

In the Middle Ages puppets portrayed biblical stories. There is evidence they were used by Christians in the catacombs. They appeared in Italian and French chapels to teach Christian doctrine.

Then puppets and Christianity parted company. Banned from sanctuaries by the Council of Trent, they still starred in some miracle plays and biblical dramas, but they soon were more popular as purely secular entertainment. Puppets also were condemned by the Puritans of Salem, Mass., who believed witches used them to cast evil spells.

Now puppets again are welcome in churches, both to educate and to entertain. Their uses here, as anywhere, are limited only by the imaginations of the people involved. At Chapel Hill United Methodist Church in Dallas, for example, they are used in vacation church schools. Individual children who showed particular interest in puppets there have also been involved in play production. A Rochester, Mich., congregation—St. Paul United Methodist—hopes that using puppets in church school will help children "become more aware of who they are and how they can relate to others."

The United Methodist Board of Education also sees puppetry as "a tremendous teaching tool," particularly to help youngsters express their true feelings and concerns.

Ideas to Think and Act On

Short of undertaking a project oneself, there are two good ways to find out what is involved in using drama in the church.

First, attend a drama workshop or two. There is probably one scheduled somewhere in your state or region. The Midwest Council for Drama and Other Arts (MCDA), for example, holds annual, week-long sessions. Last July's sessions in Kansas City, Mo., gave participants a chance to experiment personally with visual arts, music, movement, and verbal expression—the integral parts of drama.

Some workshops are very specialized, like the week of puppetry in education held in Nashville last August. Co-sponsored by Scarritt College, the United Methodist Board of Education, and the Puppeteers of America, it featured workshops conducted by some of the nation's top puppeteers. There were sessions for both beginning and advanced puppet enthusiasts. A similar national workshop probably will be put on by the same sponsors in 1973.

Second, talk with someone who already has tried drama in the local church. One of the most helpful persons with whom we talked was Frances Burt, a member of Sacramento's First United Methodist Church, and a lifelong thespian. She has written and directed plays for church, school, and 4-H Club groups. She founded a one-day art and craft exhibit at First Church 15 years ago, which now has become an ecumenical, week-long festival of religious arts. We asked her to comment on how drama can help a local congregation.

"Incorporating short dramas in the church service is very successful," she has found. "They can be used as an extension of or in place of the sermon. Longer plays and special religious holiday works must, of course, be presented as an event outside the service. We found Friday evenings, or the 'vesper' hour of four o'clock Sunday to work out well for us. Whenever our church has drama in its early 'informal' service, it has pleased the congregation. Occasionally we use it at Women's Society meetings. (The big problem is tying busy people down to a rehearsal schedule. Amateurs lack the dedication inherent in regulars—they do not believe 'the play's the thing'.)

"People will accept a criticism or a controversial opinion from an actor playing a part, where they will not in a direct message. They may relate to it, be amused by it, question it, but they will not miss the point or quickly forget it. A satire of a common effort, or a modern version of a historical happening, or the portrayal of a biblical truth will communicate more understanding, as I see it, than the preached word.

"In one play we produced, the lost faith of a young minister of the 1830s was restored. People suffered with him and rejoiced at his triumph. It could have happened today. In another play, the persecution of a modern Stephen and his 'hippie' followers by an ultraconservative-establishment Saul and all his power, culminating in Stephen's arrest and killing, drew protest and criticism from some as being 'too strong.' Others lived it, felt it, understood it as proof that the Bible is relevant, and

believed the play gave new life to the Book of Acts.

"I would never recommend overdoing drama in church. It would lose its value as a vehicle for expression. Two or three times a year is all I think it should be used in the sanctuary," Mrs. Burt suggests.

Jim Harnish of Dramatic Ministries at Asbury Seminary was one of several who reminded us that secular works can be very meaningful to congregations:

"Much of 'religious drama' leaves a great deal to be desired theologically and dramatically. Therefore, we consider material from the best of the secular stage which speaks to us about our relationship with Jesus Christ."

Jim speaks confidently of the new directions drama in the church can take: "I feel that the doors are just be-

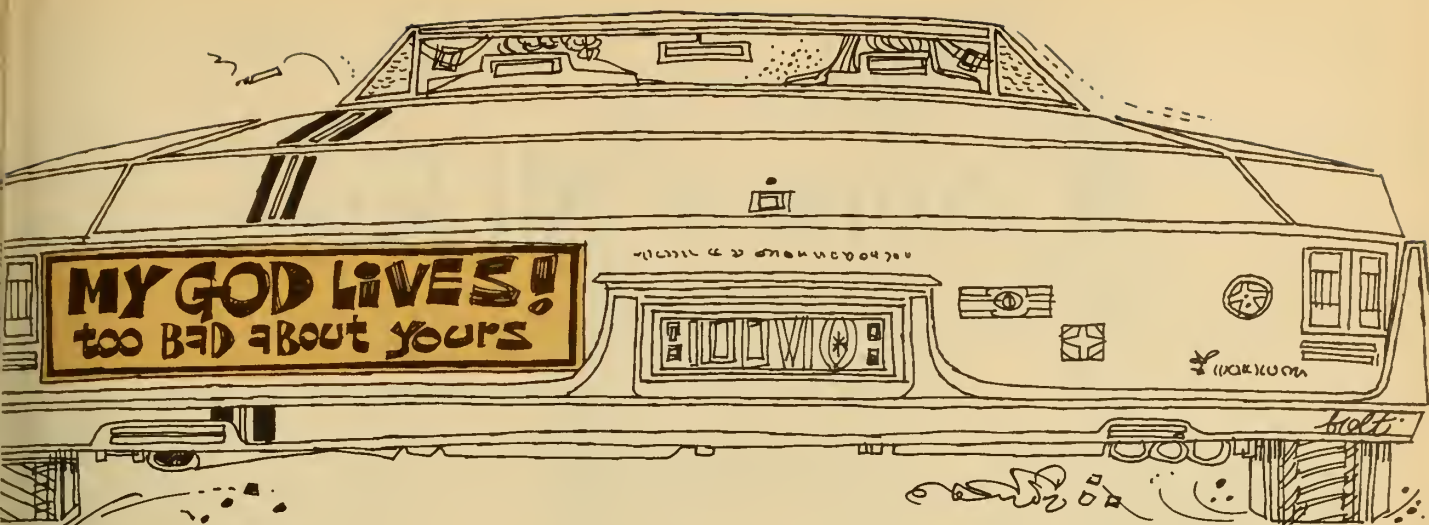
ginning to open in the use of creative forms of witness. *Jesus Christ Superstar*, in spite of its theological weaknesses, proves that the performing arts can express the Christian faith and that people will respond to this form of ministry—often more openly than to any other."

A strong "Amen!" comes all the way from Korea where Margaret Martin Moore, United Methodist missionary and drama specialist, has seen religious drama grow "tremendously" in the past dozen years.

"The sermon alone is no longer enough to reach the . . . mind for Christ and his kingdom," she writes. "Because of this, religious drama, or secular drama with moral impact, must rise to the challenge—to educate, to inspire, to undergird with spiritual strength." □

Street theaters, like this Paterson, N.J., troupe performing in a park, are a popular form of education and recreation in inner-city areas. Performers often write their own scripts, usually perform in streets.





Bumper-Sticker Christianity

THIS bumper sticker really offended me. It said, in large letters, *My God Lives*, and immediately below in smaller ones, *Too Bad About Yours*.

I have always had reservations about the value of bumper-stickers, regardless of pious content, in directing the attention of others to God and the role religion should play in our lives. Too often the bumper-sticker may proclaim a wonderful truth such as *My God Lives*, but the driver forgets that sentiment as he drives like a pagan, displays unchristian behavior at stop signs, and causes ideas almost to spring into searing words of damnation when I am behind his un-signalized left turn.

But aside from bumper-sticker aversion—perhaps an individual shortcoming on my part—the content of this particular message seemed to bother me more than any other I had observed. I studied it some more.

Who can argue with *My God Lives*? Certainly not me. I know for a fact that God does live, that he works within the lives of us all. He is the director of the world scene, the motivating force that men and nations must contend with at one time or other. He is real, a persistent power which mankind can ill afford to dismiss.

No, *My God Lives* is a true and inspiring statement, even when on the back of a dusty automobile. It was something else that jarred me.

I decided it was the smaller letters that had soured my thoughts, the *Too Bad About Yours*. I know it's flip, a modern expression, and it does make a point. But what emphasis does it slam against the attention of the drivers following?

The bumper sticker is proclaiming that *my God* is dead, that everyone's God is dead except the very special God belonging to the lucky fellow with the words between his tail-lights. I refuse to believe that a bumper sticker can remove God from my life one iota: the implication in those four simple words is a challenge to my concept of God.

Okay, so the words were not meant for me, perhaps were never intended to convey such an idea. But what about the true unbeliever following this statement through the commuter hassle? Can we assume his God is dead since he does not count a supreme being as partner in his daily life?

We must regard God in very narrow terms to think that he exists only for those who accept and believe in him. God is larger than life and he lives for all, believer and unbeliever alike. Just because there are those who do not acknowledge the

reality of God is no reason to assume that God refuses to acknowledge *their* existence.

Too Bad About Yours indicates that God has deserted all those people who find no room for him. Not so! God lives for us all, sinners and saints, believers and unbelievers alike.

It was Peter Abelard, 11th-century philosopher-theologian, who wrote, "God considers not the action but the spirit of the action." This idea disturbed his contemporaries no end, much as the bumper sticker bothered me. But a small disruption, a wee irritation, can be a positive force. Irritation often leads to action, perhaps only mental activity, but reflecting on God, his role as a personal deity, is a part of spiritual growth from which we all can benefit.

I know that God rises above the interpretations of man, above the gelatin foundations of theological bumper stickers, that he will survive cars and traffic, freeways and commuter snarls, even mankind eventually.

God lives for us all, the fellow with the bumper sticker as well as the man, whoever he may be, who follows patiently behind.

—Glenn E. Pritchard

Gracie was just 36 when muscular dystrophy forced her into a rest home.

Count It All Joy

By VERA THOMAS

IT WAS just another Monday afternoon visit to the rest home until the supervisor called me into her office. "Within the next few days a new patient, Gracie Wood, will arrive," she said. "I wish you'd look her up. She's 36, has muscular dystrophy, and this is her first rest-home experience."

"Muscular dystrophy!" I exclaimed over and over driving home. "Dear God! What are you trying to tell me?" How well God knew the heart-ache I had suffered since my youngest sister Evelyn had been forced to give up teaching in her late 30s, a victim of muscular dystrophy and now a rest-home patient on the other side of the continent.

I remembered the hopelessness I had read between the lines of my sister's letters—her apathy about suggestions I had made and parcels I had sent. Even tapes I had made for her to play on a borrowed recorder had fallen flat. I almost dreaded going to the mailbox anymore.

"The rest-home owner has tried to interest me in tutoring school children," Evelyn had written. "But I'm sure it wouldn't work out. It would only make me nervous." Obviously, she had lost all confidence in herself.

In spite of my belief in prayer, I was at my wits' end to help my sister, and now I had been asked to visit a girl with the same affliction. I couldn't even consider it. The supervisor would understand.

Still I had no peace. The more I prayed, the more I knew God's hand was in it, and somehow or other he would make a way.

The following Monday, before leaving for the rest home, I prayed, "Dear God, give me the strength that I need. Tell me what to say. And above all, don't let me cry when I see the tremor in her hands."

At the front office, hoping I looked

more composed than I inwardly felt, I asked where I could find the new patient.

"Oh, you mean Gracie," the nurse replied in a manner that told me right away that she liked Gracie and so would I.

One look at Gracie, sitting in her walker, plump and pretty, wreathed in a big welcome smile, and the butterflies in my heart subsided. "Hi!" she called out cheerfully. I explained that the supervisor had asked me to look her up. She chatted easily, bubbling over with the joy of just being alive.

"I've loved mountains all my life," she said, raising her right hand to point out the view. "Isn't God good to put me in a place like this where I can see the mountains first thing every morning?" Yes, the tremor was there but on Gracie it hardly showed. As she told me how much she was enjoying the rest home, I knew a little thing like a tremor wasn't going to keep her from doing all the things she wanted to do.

"Until a few years ago, I took care of my brother's young children," she said. "I've had muscular dystrophy all my life and I got around pretty well until I broke my leg twice. It hasn't mended yet. In occupational-therapy class I was insulted when they gave me Playdoh. I told them I've always made my own clothes, and asked them for a sewing machine. The doctors don't understand."

"I made up my mind when I came here I was going to be happy," she went on. "Everyone is so good to me. I have to decide right at the beginning I'm going to like something or I can do something, and I find it works every time."

After I told Gracie I planned to visit her regularly and wanted to be her friend, I mentioned Evelyn and how much I wished to help her. "Oh,

she's got to keep busy and make an effort," Gracie said, throwing down a looped string to lasso the foot of her broken leg and tuck it under her full skirt. "She's just given up inside. She needs to read the first chapter of James where it tells us to count it all joy when we fall into bad situations." I could see Gracie was on such good terms with God he wouldn't mind her taking liberty with his words.

Gracie displayed great interest in some handcrafted items I took and asked if I would teach her. Her first craftwork, a lamp covered with discarded foil wrap, resembled a priceless antique. Then followed ceramic tilework, every piece worked out in a special design, that did justice to an expert craftsman. "Any kindergartner can work with tile," she explained. "It's the design that makes it an art." When I admired her work and said it was good enough to sell, Gracie showed her first diffidence.

"Oh, no, I wouldn't consider taking orders or selling anything," she said. "I'd get nervous and feel under pressure. I only enjoy doing things for myself or to give away."

Could this be the same lack of confidence my sister showed? I wondered silently.

The following week Gracie greeted me exuberantly. "Guess what! I've sold a set of tile coasters for \$5, and I have orders to do others. Look at the lazy Susan I've just grouted! One of the nurses wants me to make a dress for her, and she insists on paying me for it. I need more tile and grout. And can you bring me some mail-order catalogs so I can do my Christmas shopping with the money I'm earning?"

No doubt about it, Gracie was in business, and all hands joined to find the craft materials for which she was unable to shop.

Gracie's heart was set on a talking "Smokey the Bear" for a beloved two-year-old nephew. In a county-wide search one was found in a store 10 miles away and the whole rest home rejoiced.

Feeling nothing was too difficult for her to tackle, I demonstrated how to turn a Styrofoam ball, sequins, pearls, ribbon, and braid into a jeweled decoration. When Gracie had trouble with the tiny pins, I regretted suggesting anything so intricate. "I'll just have to practice," she said nonchalantly.

On my next visit exquisitely trimmed balls hung all over the curtains. "Who helped you?" I asked, knowing such artistry was beyond her physical limitations. She assured me not only had she decorated all the stock she had on hand but was taking orders for additional balls.

When Gracie inadvertently dropped a box containing thousands of pins, a nurse's aide bent over to pick them up. In the process she knocked over a glass of water and countless miniature sequin stars. For a moment the girls stared in disbelief at the floating stars and pins scattered in all directions, then they threw their arms around each other and laughed until they cried. After retrieving every pin and star on her knees, the aide came up with a smile. Nothing was too much if it helped Gracie. Telling about it afterwards, Gracie said, "Greater love hath no man."

Sometimes Gracie shuffled along the corridors in her walker to show bed patients her latest accomplishment. "Deelybobs," she proudly called them. Patients in their wheelchairs and walkers dropped into Gracie's workshop to watch her sort and match and pin while she beamed and chuckled. They often bought an item before Gracie had finished it. Outsiders, hearing about Gracie's crafts, took her lace, beads, ribbons, and braids unearthed from attics.

On Gracie's encouragement, more and more patients attended the rest-home entertainment sponsored by churches, dancing classes, singing groups, and senior citizens.

My letters to Evelyn told about Gracie, her wonderful attitude about life, her popularity with everyone, and her amazing achievements. Then one day Gracie told all about it on a tape I mailed to Evelyn.

Gradually Evelyn's letters began to



"Look at the lazy Susan I've just grouted! One of the nurses wants me to make a dress . . . and insists on paying me for it." No doubt about it, Gracie was in business.

He Meant Business

DURING my more than 50 years in the ministry, "Heinie" Wildberger is the layman who stands out most in my memory. In my book, he was the number one steward in the church from which he was carried to his grave.

Three weeks before annual conference in 1938, the Methodist Episcopal Church building at Ferguson, Mo., was completely gutted by fire. The pastor was physically and emotionally unequipped to direct a building campaign that would be necessary immediately.

Thus it fell my lot to be transferred from the oldest Protestant church in Kansas City to the church in Ferguson, a suburb of St. Louis. The little surprise awaiting me in this move was that those in authority had failed to mention the fire. You can imagine the butterflies I felt inside me when I arrived and found nothing but a mass of ruins where a church had been.

The only thing to do was begin the task of rebuilding at once. So, within my first month on the new job, committees had been appointed and all necessary steps had been taken for approval of a building project. The insurance money came quickly since the old building was a total wreck. A canvass of members for pledges, covering a three-year period, was completed. The building committee then agreed on an architect, one whom I soon came to appreciate as ideal for our situation.

After tabulating the cost of what we needed and subtracting from this the total of our insurance and pledges, the difference was staggering. None of us had dreamed the cost would be so great.

Matters dragged along for about two months. Not one of the business and professional men on our committee was able to see how we could finance the new building. Every bank and financial organization we approached gave us a disappointing answer.

Then something unexpected happened. On both the official board

and the finance committee was a quiet German baker, Henry Wildberger. He did his work in the bakery at night, so it was often necessary for him to leave our meetings before they were over.

One night when things seemed hopelessly bogged down, a chair scraped the floor in the back of the room, and Heinie got to his feet. Hands in his pockets, he came forward and began to talk quietly:

"We have tried about everything we know, brethren. Now I want to tell you how we get the money."

"Good for you, Heinie," the presiding officer responded wearily, showing doubt in both his face and his voice. "Tell us, and then we can all go home."

"Well," said Heinie, "you fellows all know that I sleep 'til eleven o'clock every day. All of you meet me at the bank at noon tomorrow, and bring the deeds to your houses with you." Then he sat down.

The whole group looked as if someone had drawn a whitewash brush across their blank faces. When the blood rushed back, their expressions changed to consternation. Not a man there doubted that Heinie had meant what he said. And almost every one was a property holder.

But at noon the next day the board members met Heinie at the bank. The banker was stunned when they offered him collateral far above the amount of the loan they sought.

"Gentlemen," he asked, "do you really mean to put the deeds to your homes and businesses behind this?"

"We do," came their reply, almost as one man.

"Well," he said, "I will call my directors to meet this afternoon, and I will phone their decision before dinner."

The loan was granted. The deeds were turned back on the strength of the men's signatures. And the church was finished in 14 months—all because one layman had really meant business.

—E. W. Bartley, Sr.

change after that. Instead of the usual two pages full of self-pity once a month, she wrote eight pages every week, telling of all the exciting things that were happening in her life. "I've started teaching kindergarten," she wrote, showing her first enthusiasm in years. "The children come to the rest home. Like Gracie, I'm using the money for my Christmas shopping." I wept with sheer joy.

Then she told me she had wrapped all the "trick or treat" bags of candy and given them out to the children for Halloween. "For nearly three hours I sat by the front door with a blanket over my knees, meeting the children and handing out treats." Real happiness was beginning to creep into her letters. Apparently she felt if Gracie could rise above circumstances, so could she.

"And where did you ever get the impression I haven't liked the tapes?" she continued. "I'm enjoying them so much I've bought my own recorder. I'm preparing a tape to send you, with a message for Gracie. And send me Gracie's address, I'd like to correspond with her."

"Correspond with a school-teacher!" Gracie exclaimed, aghast at such a preposterous idea. "I never could spell worth two cents!"

But, of course, it will work out, as everything does with Gracie. She'll be fully occupied creating her Christmas "deelybobs" right up to the minute her folks take her home for a family gathering. On her return to the rest home she plans to resume her ceramic tilework, make scrapbooks for hospitalized children, and learn new crafts with flowers, jewelry, candles, and stained glass. The rest-home owner has commissioned her to do mosaics for the rest home.

And she looks forward to the church service every Sunday morning in the recreation room. Jerking her body from side to side for momentum, she inches her walker down the hall, calling cheerily in all directions: "Come to church! It'll do you good."

Now and then she stops long enough to figure out the species of bird on the feeder outside her window and, wistfully looking beyond, she gives thanks for the mountains in the distance. And her many admiring friends give thanks to the Creator for Gracie as they bask in the radiance of her ministry of joy. □



I Am Peter

By VICTOR T. FUJII

Pastor, Northbrook United Methodist Church
Northbrook, Illinois

TO MY HEBREW friends I am known as Simeon, renamed Cephas (the Rock) by our Lord. And to my Gentile friends, I am Simon, and Peter, the Rock.

Since I have been condemned to death, I have requested my Roman captors that my execution be different from that of our Lord. I am not worthy to be crucified just as he was. I would like to be hung upside down in order that I may more exalt him. My friend Paul was executed by the same Emperor Nero some two years ago; may God grant him peace. We both agreed that he would be the Apostle to the Gentiles, and I would be our Lord's messenger to the Jews. Now a whole army of loyal witnesses stand ready to take our places.

I can still remember the strong and magnetic face of our Master as he appeared by the shore of the Sea of Galilee and called to us, "Follow me and you will catch men!" And before the astonished faces of our relatives and servants we left our boats and nets and followed. There was not only myself but my brother Andrew, and our partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee.

We had been attracted earlier to the powerful preaching of judgment by John the Baptizer, and he warned that one would come after him, whose sandals he would not be worthy to untie. And now Jesus had come, pro-

claiming the kingdom of God. It was good that my father, Jonas, had enough help for Andrew and I were determined to follow Jesus. It is hard to believe this all took place only about 37 years ago.

It was not easy to leave a thriving business, but when the Messiah for whom we had been waiting made his appearance, there could be no doubt of our decision. The adventure that began then has taken us through many countries and many trials and tribulations; it has been well worth it.

We had almost given up hope. Our many years of studying the books of the law of Moses were beneficial, and yet we always seemed to be waiting for something. Some in our nation were always calling for action. Take up the sword! Get rid of the Roman oppressors! If the Kingdom is not going to come about peacefully, let it come violently! But Rome always triumphed, and the zealous ones rotted on crosses.

The first few weeks with Jesus were exhilarating as we watched him heal, forgive sins, comfort, and challenge. Then there was that day when he chose 12 of us to be his disciples. We had feelings both of pride and of mis-giving; we knew we were working for the kingdom of God, but we were impulsive human beings.

There was that day, looking at the inexhaustible patience of our Lord, when I asked him, "If one offend me, how often should I forgive him? Seven times?" And he said, "Seventy times seven!" Our discipline was therefore no ordinary one.

There was another day when his popularity had begun to wane and opposition arose from the high priest, and he asked us, "Whom do men say that I am?" We all made some answer: "Some say you're John the Baptist. Others say Elijah or Jeremiah or that one of the other old prophets has arisen." But then the truth dawned on me, and I said spontaneously, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

A look of transfiguration came over him, of light and pleasure. But then he warned that this messiahship would involve suffering. Incredible! And yet, as I see it now, it was true. The great day came when our discipleship ended and we became apostles—personal emissaries of our Lord. We were told to go out two by two, to take little, and to expect little; but we were to heal, cast out demons, and preach the Kingdom. What power we felt!

Then there was the time when James, John, and I were with him, and he looked like he was transformed for he was like the great leaders of the past: Moses and Elijah. We were about to build him a memorial temple right then and there, but he wanted us to go back into the sick world. That was the way he always was, and illness and trouble were soon in coming.

Our last meal together was unforgettable. Not only did he wash our feet and teach us that we were servants of the Kingdom in the world, but he served the loaves and wine to indicate his death and presence—that when we took those elements in devotion and prayer, it would stand for his presence and the possible future victorious banquet. We were a little puzzled about his somberness

so soon after our victorious entrance into Jerusalem, but we soon found out how tragically things would end.

The next few moments came quickly and were the most horrible. Our Lord was in agony of prayer, and yet we friends did not stay up with him. When he went into the Garden of Gethsemane for prayer, we fell asleep. Soon the Temple guards were all over the place; they arrested our Lord and took him away. We were frightened and ran, but we noticed that it was Judas who had led the guards. Later we found out why.

Curiosity got the better of me, and I left our hiding place to see what had happened to the Lord. The experience was so painful it still makes me shudder to think about it. Every time I hear a rooster crowing in the morning, a cold chill comes over me, and I pray for strength. I hung around the edges of the crowd at the trial of Jesus and was recognized by some as a northerner and by a little girl as an apostle. But I was so flustered and frightened I denied everything. God have mercy; I denied my friendship with our Lord three times, and just then a cock crowed. Across the sea of faces Jesus looked at me with pity.

I sometimes wondered why our Lord renamed me "the Rock." Me—hot-tempered, impulsive, always rushing into things. At his trial I was the dirt under his feet. Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man! I was no better than Judas. Jesus stood for the Kingdom in courage and faith, and I should have stood with him. Instead I denied him.

It was with a great sense of exhilaration, therefore, that we began to realize that death and men could not hold him. He was alive! The authorities thought they had done away with him, but he was alive because he was alive in me and in Andrew and James and John and the others.

The kingdom of God was not a quiet and meek acceptance of things just as they are. Neither was it to be brought in by violence. But it was a combination of both integrity and peace, love and justice. This Kingdom would cross over lines of status, money and position; it was to grow from a tiny mustard seed.

On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God came and filled us with the urge and courage to witness to truth, for like Jesus before, we were now the bearers of the Kingdom. We testified before an astonished group of people that day that we were not drunk but filled with the Spirit, and that Jesus was alive. I felt especially commissioned by God to strengthen our brothers.

The next few years were times of adventure. We felt the constant desire and joy to spread the salvation of God. Several times we were imprisoned, but we could not be suppressed. We insisted that we would obey God rather than man.

Those of the Way in Jerusalem met regularly for prayer, praise, and teaching, and I was called upon many times. One day we healed a beggar at the door of the Temple. The family of Jesus joined us, and James, the Lord's brother, was particularly strong and eventually became the leader in Jerusalem.

It became inevitable that Gentiles began to inquire about our joy, our faith, our concern for each other, and their hearts began to ache. But I had been reared a Jew; what was to be done? There was something about Jesus that was Hebrew, and yet, he was more.

What convinced me was the call I received to go to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile and a career soldier. My doubts were dispelled in a dream when I was encouraged to disregard little prejudices about food for all was clean before God, and therefore all humans were acceptable to God. I then went to the house of Cornelius, and the same spirit that fell at Pentecost came over Cornelius. Amid rejoicing we baptized his family. The deed done, the good news could and would go to Gentiles! But what would the brothers think?

Things came to a head at the Jerusalem Council when that fiery new apostle Paul came, and all the apostles who were still alive, and new Christians, Jews and Gentiles. Just 20 years from the death of our Lord we were doing new things, going to new people, to Gentiles; the old world was breaking up. After some discussion the truth could not be denied. Some small requirements were mentioned, but the decision was made: Gentiles could join those of us of the Way and there would be no hindrance. We began to understand the words of our Lord, "Go into all the world."

At times, my weaknesses began to show. All my life I have done things without thinking and have had to pay for them. Some thought my visit to Cornelius was not right, but our decision was to proceed. Since Paul was strong on appealing to Gentiles, we agreed that my work would be with the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

My wife has been accompanying me on journeys. Ever since her mother was healed by our Lord, she has been most enthusiastic. She is proving what Paul has been saying: "There is no slave or free man, neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, before God."

In these last days of my life I would encourage you as I wrote to the Christians of northern Asia Minor recently: Have hope. Have hope in Christ through his rising from the dead. We shall be secure amidst all our persecution; we shall be worthy of this hope and of the church of Christ. I therefore exhort you to be Christian in all you do: as regards to our nation, in all human relationships, in the home, and under difficulty. You come to Christ as living stones to the immensely valuable living stone (rejected by man, but chosen by God), to be built into a spiritual house of God. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone.

I have been called Peter, the Rock. But I have been weak and impulsive. I have failed many times; I have listened too much to men. But my foundations are on Jesus, the cornerstone.

The 12 have scattered throughout the world, bringing the message of salvation and hope. It is rumored that Thomas, the skeptical one, has traveled even to the far countries of the East. Some have been opposed and some have given their lives for the Lord. But new Christians have taken their places: Philip, Barnabas, James, the Lord's brother, Sylvanus, and Paul, to name a few. John Mark has had his problems (maybe he is like me), but has become steady now. At the request of many, I have been dictating to him what I remember of our Master while he was alive.

Maybe, like the writings of Moses, the good news of Jesus the anointed one will be placed on scrolls for the whole world to read. I am ready. We have set our hopes on a new heaven and a new earth in which nothing but good lives. Come, Lord Jesus. □

Your Faith

Christians seeking truth always have questions about their faith, and Iowa Bishop James S. Thomas discusses some of them each month on this page. Send yours to him c/o TOGETHER, Box 423, Park Ridge, Ill. 60068.



Why is life so unfair?

✦ Try as we might, we cannot explain all the mystery of adversity. A good woman who wants children cannot have them while another who doesn't want them can; a burdened man becomes even more burdened; an evil man lives long while a good man in the same town dies in the prime of life—all are situations over which serious Christians have agonized. It does not seem to make sense; life does not seem to be fair.

One does not resolve this dilemma simply by turning his back on life. The verdict of history is clear: love is stronger than hate, kindness improves more lives than cruelty, and courage is more powerful than fear. It is hard truth, but life was not meant to be fair. A loving God meant life to be full of love and sometimes love is hard. He meant for his justice to prevail; and that is often far superior to man's fairness.

Who is to say what is right or wrong?

✦ Given our dislike for authority, the easy answer is "nobody." But that simply is not true. Organized society demands a number of authorities. We have the right to question any authority, but we do not have the right to say that one man's unexamined opinion is as good as another man's carefully disciplined judgment.

Laws are established to protect the lives of drivers on the highway. Society

has given policemen the right to tell us it is wrong to drive 90 miles an hour in a 50-mile-an-hour zone. Likewise, there are guidelines to right and wrong in religious matters. Reliable guidelines are the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the whole message of the Bible, a deep understanding of the best in the religious tradition, and a keen and discerning understanding of human nature.

What is the meaning of the providence of God?

✦ "Providence," writes theologian Van A. Harvey, "traditionally has encompassed three closely related ideas: the divine preservation . . . ; the divine co-operation . . . ; the divine government . . . by which God fulfills his purpose for the creatures by guiding them" (*A Handbook of Theological Terms*, Macmillan, \$1.45, paperback).

It is not quite correct, then, to say that one act is providential while another is not. In the great purposes of God, what appears to us as tragedy at present may turn out to be salvation in the long run.

We err in thinking of providence as God's kindly intervention on our behalf. It is more correct to see God as being active and moving in history to accomplish great purposes through us.

After a near-fatal illness the lay theologian William Stringfellow wrote: "*Perhaps everything is providential*. If everything is providential, then providence means the constant and continual renewal of God's grace in all situations for every man throughout time" (*A Second Birthday*, Doubleday, \$5.95).



Too young to understand the Scripture read

An Indian Shepherd for New York Flocks

*The junior prayer,
a ritual with Mr. Solomon, enables
the children to have a special
part in worship services.*



t Solomon, turns to her mother for attention.

EVERY Sunday is a "missions Sunday" for two rural congregations in western New York. Their pastor, the Rev. Samson Solomon, is from India.

Mr. Solomon, a native of Moradabad, is serving his fifth winter with the 87 United Methodists of the Wyoming church and the 52 members of Covington United Methodist. Each Sunday at 10 a.m. he leads worship at the Wyoming church, then drives nine miles to Covington for services there. His wife, Kumud, and their children—Sanjay, nine, Sandee, five, and American-born Punam, three—usually attend the early service.

Mr. Solomon decided to enter the ministry in 1960 at one of evangelist E. Stanley Jones's ashrams. He is in the United States to study at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School and is concentrating his master's degree work—as his name implies he should—on the Old Testament.

The Solomons had never seen snow before coming to New York, and Wyoming County has more of it than they like. Otherwise, they find the United States "dandy," as Mrs. Solomon says.

When Mr. Solomon completes his studies in a year or two, he and his family will return to their homeland. His task there will be the same as it is in New York—"to preach the Word of God and to help others know the Scriptures."

—Bob Buyer

Members of the Wyoming Congregation greet their pastor on a brisk Sunday morning.



Letters

PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS NEED CHURCH'S HELP

I was delighted to read *A Church Wakes Up to Senior Power* by Edward L. Peet in the December, 1971, issue of *Together*. I have been wondering for several years why the churches, including the United Methodist, did not take a more active part in senior citizens programs.

Six years ago we organized a senior citizens group at our local church, University Park United Methodist, here in Denver, but we need additional materials from the church at large.

GUY E. MACY
Denver, Colo.

United Methodism's General Board of Education serves groups like reader Macy's through its Division of the Local Church. For information write Miss Virginia Stafford, Division of the Local Church, P.O. Box 871, Nashville, Tenn. 37202.—Your Editors

JESUS PEOPLE NEED HELP, NOT CRITICISM

I have read your two articles on the Jesus People in the December, 1971, issue [pages 23-27], and I would like to make some comments.

It is quite evident that today's youth are like all youth in being in revolt against their elders. But unlike many of earlier years, they are doing something about it. Some of these youth have found Jesus, and the thrill resulting from understanding what the Bible says life is all about brings the same reaction that the Holy Spirit has always brought to its newcomers. These youth are so full of joy, love, and happiness that they shout, stamp their feet, clap their hands, sing, play loud music.

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Park Ridge, Ill. 60068

They also hope to find someone who will listen to them, attempt to answer their questions, and show them what they must do to continue on the right road. But what do they get? Typically, they get ignored or bawled out or criticized—all of which cools their enthusiasm and confirms them in the belief that no good can come from their elders. This results in many of them losing their way toward the kingdom of God.

I have long been a member of the Methodist Church, but whenever I asked a question or made a statement during my teens, I was either bawled out or criticized but never allowed to discuss or clear up my questions. What happened? I remained a "neutral" Methodist until a few years ago. I never left the church, but I never became enthused about it either.

Then a few years ago I was awakened and since then I have turned eagerly to my Bible which I had neglected since my youth. Now I am filled with joy, peace, love, tolerance, understanding, and humility, all of which Paul states are the fruits which the Holy Spirit brings to those who obey his will. But what a waste my life has been because of my wrong start as a teen-ager.

I pray that the editors of *Together* will do all they can to help today youth stay with their enthusiasm and work for Jesus.

R. T. BURD K
Mesa, A

DO JESUS PEOPLE KNOW THE BIBLE'S DRESS CODE?

I wonder whether the Jesus People who say they "believe in the Word of God—straight—as it comes from his book, the Bible" know the dress code according to that book:

"... that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel..." (1 Timothy 2:9)

"A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whoever does these things is abomination to the Lord your God." (Deuteronomy 22:5.)

CORA E. BRICK
Elizabethtown, I

DECEMBER FEATURES WEIGHED, FOUND LACKING

Just a few comments concerning your issue of December, 1971:

The cover would not attract anyone to the Christian faith. The picture

CHILD'S CHRISTMAS ART INSPIRES POET'S THOUGHT

Having worked for many years with teachers and children in the field of Christian education, and as a writer of some of our church-school materials, I was very much interested in the Christmas drawings by boys and girls which appeared in the December, 1971, issue of *Together*.

I was particularly stirred by the

drawing of Sherri More of Chapel Hill, N.C., and her statement, "Christmas means the time of giving thanks to God and helping people and being kind."

I am sending you some thoughts upon seeing this drawing.

MURIEL M. GESSNER
Baldwin City, Kan

EXCEPT YOU BECOME . . .

(Upon seeing a child's drawing of Christmas)

Could there be hidden in child's heart
As in blest Mary's long ago
Prescience of Incarnate Love?

For look—the child's crayons show
Proclaiming Star,
And underneath, a tree, non-tinseled, green
The root of Jesse,
The creativity of God
—And juxtaposed, the Cross.
Omega? No,
For underneath, the notes of music flow
To tell of Life and Death—the glory and the pain.
Emmanuel! Emmanuel!

—Muriel M. Gessner

faceless, the figures dim and
zy. It fails to give a clear message.
Something better could have been
osen to represent the Christmas
ason.

While there are many good things
the testimony of the two-year
missionaries [see *Committed to a*
la-style, page 11], I felt as I read
the article that they lack an
understanding of the Christian
message. They fail to see that the
central cause of our present
order is the sinful human heart.
The cup of cold water should be
even in the Master's name. When we
have him out, we become no
different from secular reformers.
We should not imitate government
social programs but should
concentrate upon our real mission
reconciling men to God.
I was sorry to read in *Films & TV*
[page 21] a snide remark concerning
a Disney philosophy. We of the
Church should teach the value of
honest work well done as a builder
character and a contribution to
the world. To ridicule "goodness
its own reward" is to cut the heart
out of Christian ethics. The Christian
sometimes rewarded and sometimes
not, but the Christian life cannot
be built on any other standard
than that laid down by the Master.

W. FAY BUTLER
Oceanside, Calif.

TOUGH COMMERCIALISM WITHOUT INCLUDING SANTA

Regarding your *Christmas and the*
children pictorial feature in the
December, 1971, issue [pages
2-40]:

I feel there is enough
commercialism and nonreligious
material in the Christmas season that
don't appreciate illustrated mention
of Santa Claus in a religious
publication.

MRS. DWIGHT YORK
Lomira, Wis.

MARY MAGDALENE: SYMBOL OF EVERYWOMAN

I was interested in a letter from
J. W. Siegford and an editor's
note with it in the November 1971
issue. (See *Magdalene a Harlot?*
able Does Not Agree, page 50.)

As your reference is to the rock
opera, *Jesus Christ, Superstar*, you
are both mistaken—or at least half
mistaken. Actually the character
of Mary Magdalene in this musical
drama is a composite of three or

four different women in the Gospels.

It is true that Mary Magdalene
is nowhere identified in the Gospels
as a "whore," but I think it was
the intention of the authors of
Superstar to characterize her as
"Everywoman," combining the good
and evil of all women into the
only female character in the drama.
(If there's such a thing as poetic
license, why not dramatic license?)

And what could be more hauntingly
glorious than the experience of a
forgiven former harlot whose only
past frame of reference had been
illicit "love," but who now finds
herself experiencing the pure
and personal love of Christ and
struggles to understand this awesome
new kind of love and how it has
changed her. A character in a
drama must have a name, thus
"Mary Magdalene."

MRS. ROBERT J. MOORE
Logansport, Ind.

'SMALL FRY' STORIES OFFER GOOD LESSONS

I have been reading *Together*
for years. My daughter grew up
enjoying the *Small Fry* section, and
now that she is on her way to
help children learn to read, we are
disappointed that you do not
publish this feature in the magazine
now for her to clip the stories for
a scrapbook for her reading circle
at school.

There are so many lessons for
children to learn, and in these
stories the lessons are presented in
such a manner that the children
are eager to profit by them.

Will you please continue publishing
this section?

MRS. HELEN ROBINSON
Kansas City, Mo.

*Although the Small Fry pages are
not included every month, they do
appear in many issues—6 of the 11
published in 1971, to be exact. And
we hope to include at least that many
in 1972. This month's feature for
children, What in the World Is a
One-Way Letter? appears on pages
62 and 63.—Your Editors*

MISSION TO HOMOSEXUALS: LOVE, NOT CONDESCENSION

Reading Harry M. Savacool's letter
in your January issue [page 48], I
was disappointed in his understanding
of the Christian mission to the
homosexual community. He says he
does not want homosexuals viewed
as "hopeless outcasts" but as
"sinners in need of conversion

through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Is it not a Christian duty to
witness Christ's love to the gay
community? By "witness" I do not
mean condescending preaching
but helping individuals to work out
problems, listening, encouraging,
and sharing.

If God loves and accepts you
and me as we are, how can we afford
not to love and accept others as
they are? If God empowers us
through his Holy Spirit to control
our own lives, can we afford not to
be enablers to the powerless?
Perhaps this means encouraging Gay
Consciousness and the realization that
the homosexual is acceptable to
God as good.

Jesus said, "Love one another as
I have loved you." Notice he did
not say "tolerate" one another.

ROBERT UPTON NELSON
Camden, S.C.

KYODAN MISSIONARIES REPORT A BIT 'OPTIMISTIC'

My November, 1971, issue of
Together just came and I have
enjoyed it very much, especially
Newman Cryer's article, *The Christ*
People of Japan [page 13].

However, he is a little optimistic
about the number of Kyodan
missionaries. He said, "The Kyodan
sends out its own missionaries. At
present 38 are serving in Asia, South
America, and North America. . . ."

The October 15, 1971, issue of
Japan Christian Activity News says
the Kyodan (United Church of Christ
in Japan) has 19 persons working
abroad, and 4 of these are partially
supported by the Kyodan.

A. V. HARBIN
United Methodist Missionary
Uegahara, Nishinomiya-shi
Japan

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Correction: Credit for Pages 8-9 of January
should read: Page 9—Bill Newrock; for Page 13—
RNS.—Your Editors



'I guess you know We have a Laymans day down hear like any wheres else'

Dear Editor:

Some of your readers have wrote that only onct have I mentshuned our dog, old Storm Cloud, whom is nicknamed Stormy for short, and they want to know what kind he is, etc.

What kind of dog he is I will not go into, but he has spots and a snubby nose that makes him look like a puppie altho he is 8-year old and now a full fledged member of the Clutter family enjoying all the rites and privileges of full citizenship, the reason why I will detale in dew time.

I guess you know we have a laymans day down hear like any wheres else in the UM church. At least onct a year some poor layman is ast to git up and preach a sermon while the pastor and his congregashun looks on in pity.

Well, I am said to be as loyal a member of the Elsewhere UM church as anybody, maybe more so, having served as chm. of the bord of trusties, as treas., hed usher, chm. of the finance and membership comms., lay leader, and even onct was called on to write the church bullitin.

However and while I think laymans Sun. is a good thing I held out for years agin gitting up in the pulpitt to preach a sermon sense I suffer gratefully from stage frite. I am all rite in a crowd if my feet is on the ground, but put me up in front on a stage or platform of any kind and I start to tremble, git white and the words hang up in my throat.

But Bro. Viktor said: "You've got to do it, Hegbert. We have used up everbody they is, including your friend Froggie Fenton whom didn't show up at church more than 5 times a year until he delivered our laymans sermon last Oct. and has been a reglar in pew ever sense."

Well, Mr. Editur, the thot of gitting up in the pulpitt so paralised me that I cudnt even shake my hed and say "No, Bro. Viktor, I cant do it," and by the time I cum to my sines he was off shaking hands somewheres else, and I was stuck.

"Froggie, how did you do it?" I ast the next day. "You was up their in front of everbody last laymans Sun. and didnt turn a hair. But they better have a ambulance parked in front of the church for me as I am libel to pass out in a ded faint."

Froggie said: "Hegbert, they is nothing to it. All you do is write out your sermon and practise it 15 or 20 times and it will be automatic like you was turning on a fonograff or radio."

Which I did, Mr. Editur, walking back and 4th from room to room proclaiming my message, however, after the 5th time my wife Abby said:

"Hegbert, you are about to drive me wild with all that ranting and raving. Cant you go summers else to practise your sermon?"

After that I wood walk out in the hills a good ways from the house twict a day to practise my sermon. The best place was down by Mile

High bluff on Clear Creek where I cud bounce eckoes off the rocks and lissen to myself preach. But when Sun. morning cum, I said:

"Abby, I am a sick man. I am sinking fast. I do not have the strenth to git out of this bed. I am even too weak and trembly to make my way to the brekfast table this morning."

"Hegbert," she said, "you git out of that bed. You are not fooling me, much less the Lord who is waiting to hear from you at the 11 a.m. service this morning."

I tole Abby I did not think it wood be rite for me to git up their in the pulpitt and make a fool of myself, in front of thoes folks much less the Lord.

Well, Mr. Editur, I was in such a daze I didnt know what I was doing until I cum to up their beside Bro. Viktor in a state of paralis and everbody in the congregatshun had eyes fixt on me.

When time cum for me to read the text I had chose from Isaiah 35:3 which says "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees," I whispered to Bro. Viktor that my legs had gave out on me and wood he please read the text which he finally did, but I cud tell he was mad.

"Hegbert," he said when he set down agin, "I am not a vilent man but I am going to pull you out of that chair and hold you up in front of the pulpitt if you dont take over the service like you are supposed to this

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Layman's Day Sunday morning."

Well, that time cum all too soon, Mr. Editur. Their I was on my feet, my knees knocking, my hands white and so trembly I cudnt even pick up my notes, and the words was stuck in my throat as I knowed they wood be.

It mite not have bin for more than a minit but seamed like a hour.

Finally some of the people begun smiling and others looked like they was sorry for me. Then I herd somebody laff back near the cloak room and the laffing got louder and louder until I seen old Storm Cloud trotting down the side isle and toward the pulpitt.

He cum straight up to the front and set down on the floor and looked up at me with his tale wagging and his tongue hangin out.

"Well," said Bro. Viktor when the laffing had susided, "It seams we have a new member this morning. I wood remind him, however, that our service begins promptly at 11 a.m., not 11:30."

Then everbody laffed agin, even me, and Mr. Editur I tell you a miracle took place rite then and their for I begun to breeze thru that sermon of mine like I was a Billy Sunday or maybe even a Billy Graham.

"I do not understand it," I tole Abby after church. "The Lord really did strenthen my weak hands and he confirmed my feeble knees."

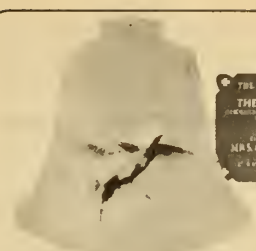
Abby said: "Hegbert, the Lord works in mysterious ways. He may have sent old Stormy just to git your mind off yourself. When you thot the congregashun was looking at Stormy insted of you then you didnt have no truble. But I do wonder what the Lord said to our dog. He never was a church going dog before to-day."

I said: "Abby, I have herd that animules can smell fear, and their was so much fear in me up their in that pulpitt I bet old Storm scented it a mile away. He knew I was in danger and he cum to my rescue."

Which he certainly did, Mr. Editur, and dont think Storm Cloud dont know it. After church he run on home ahead of us and was waiting for me with a big grin on his face.

Sinsereley,

H. Clutter



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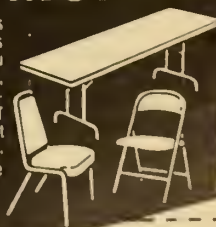
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Teens

BY DALE WHITE

SPOTTED on a church bulletin board: "The way to keep your religion is to keep it busy."

"Service" is a big word in the vocabulary of a Christian. Young people know that. Their idealism makes them restless to test their talents in the hard world of human need. They often write in anguish over the boredom of a summer spent without a meaningful challenge.

One of the best guides to voluntary service opportunities is a booklet called *Invest Yourself*. It is a catalogue of work camps, community-service projects, study seminars, and the like for high-school and college youth. It is published by the Commission on Voluntary Service and Action, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 830, New York, New York 10027. You may order it at \$1.00 a copy. I like the philosophy of the commission:

"The word 'service' points outside and beyond yourself. It implies a concern for persons, problems, issues, ideas, causes, and concerns which are bigger, beyond, and more enduring than yourself. . . . You want to become involved, go where the action is, and share yourself and your resources. *Invest Yourself* encourages you to become part of the voluntary service revolution . . . one of the hopeful signs of our times. It helps you find your place of service and involvement in this revolution."

Another good guide is the booklet *Students Abroad: High-School Student Programs*. You may order a copy from the Council on International Educational Exchange, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, New York 10017.

For a listing of United Methodist service projects, order *Church Occupations and Voluntary Service* from the Interboard Committee on Enrollment for Church Occupations, P.O. Box 871, Nashville, Tenn. 37202. A single copy costs 20¢.

I would encourage every church to have several copies of these booklets available for their young people.

Mr. Fritz LeRoque continues to plan overseas work camps under

the direction of United Methodist ministers. These are for youth 17 to 20 who wish to witness to their faith by giving time and labor in service. The teams are gone for seven to eight weeks—three or four weeks at work and the rest traveling and sight-seeing. The cost runs something over \$1,200 for each person. Write for details to Mr. Fritz LeRoque, 2815 Yojoa Place, Hacienda Heights, California.

Qa

How long does it take for a teenager to grow up? I don't mean just in age but in being mature enough to be responsible. I had to get myself almost killed before I made it.

I learned how to drive at driver ed and thought I knew all there was to know. I squealed my tires and showed off, not enough to get busted but pressing my luck, if you know what I mean. Some laws seemed silly to me. I usually obeyed them, but rebelling all the way inside. Wasn't I smart enough to write my own ticket? That's how I looked at it.

The grinding crash of that pickup hitting my car changed my mind but fast. No, I wasn't at fault, thank God. But that experience sure

made a believer out of me. I don't sneer at the traffic laws any more that's for sure.

God gave me a second chance and I figure I owe him something now—at least respect for the power he puts in my hands when I get behind the wheel.—A.J.

My girls and I were talking about that the other day. They said some of the films they saw at drive-in made them sick, but they were glad they had to watch them. Their teacher pointed out that we are born with a natural fear against falling and loud noises—but no natural fear of the power of kinetic energy. We can tool down the highway bumper to bumper at 70 miles an hour in perfect bliss, not realizing we are a guided missile close to impact. Since our instincts let us down, we have to let our intelligence and imagination tip us off to the dangers.

I'm glad your imagination got a big boost in the nick of time.

Qa

I am a girl, 16, and read the letter written by B.J. [Teens, February, page 57] on how daydreaming was like an addiction to her. I really



"There's this fan club I want to join but the 8¢ postage wipes out my allowance."

feel a desire to tell her I went through a similar situation. I can see what she is saying.

I was a dreamer. I got behind in school. I wasn't pretty, was picked on, and stayed in my room too, too much. You, B.J., don't need to worry about your mental health. I know I did and it is a horrid, gnawing fear. I know how it is. You daydream while you're working and forget what you're doing. You're afraid, really afraid of slipping into a world that is too far out, and being sent to a mental institution, disgracing your parents.

Why the dreaming? I don't really know. I was a dreamer since age eight, and have no idea why. No doubt I have conquered it or gotten over it. If it was caused by a certain need, that has been taken care of. I do not know which came first.

I think the most important factor in my change was I started praying more and more about it. I have a deep personal relationship with our Lord. He is really a very good friend and he hears and answers prayer.

Do try to spend as much time as possible on the phone talking to another person. And talk about your dreaming problems with those you feel you can. When you are doing something and feel an urge to dream, try praying. It helps even though it sometimes is hard. I've gotten through. It was about a year ago that I decided to fight it, and today I have the peace and love the Bible tells of, have gotten over my shyness, and people seldom if ever make fun of me.

Keep in mind that dreaming is fulfilling a need of yours and that Jesus can fill you with a more lasting and real peace.—C.F.

Thanks! It is very helpful to learn of your experience. Your advice seems sound to me. The only thing I would add is that a young person should not hesitate to talk to a professional counselor if the problem gets really hard to handle or won't go away.



I'm a boy, 17, and I really have two problems. One is that at our school the teachers and faculty seem to pick on me and a few other boys about our hair. Our school is the only one in our area that does this. Our hair really isn't long, but about once every week we are told to get haircuts.

My other problem is rather strange to me. It is, even though I'm not all that cute, that girls naturally seem to like me. This isn't bad except that they all like me at the same time, and I'm always hurting someone and making enemies. Please tell what I should do.—W.J.

Maybe a haircut would solve both problems. The adults could relax, and the girls wouldn't flip over you anymore.

Seriously, though, your dilemma should make adults stop to think before they lay their personal tastes onto kids for no good reason. In most places school administrators are easing up on rigid dress codes. I guess that's because parents are starting to see that the freedom to be oneself in personal styles is very important to kids today.

Parents are also learning that most kids handle freedom to dress to taste very responsibly when given a chance. When our school threw out the dress code, some predicted disaster. "The kids will come in filthy rags and wild, unwashed hair!" they insisted. They don't. They come in a colorful pageantry of individual styles, most of it tasteful and clean, if a little far out by adult standards.

As for those girls, what can I say? Half the art of human relationships is learning to say a firm no without making another feel rejected. Skill in expressing warmth without saying too much in the wrong way may be your biggest need. That comes from maturity and practice.



A few weeks ago I received some literature in the mail telling how I can have eternal life through Jesus. I found it very interesting, and decided I had been leading a bad life for too long, so I have decided to change.

My problem is that I don't have enough faith to let others know of my change. I know of very few really religious people in the area, and I feel that my change towards Christ will not make others appreciate me or feel I am still a good friend.

My parents are not religious people, and they look upon religious people as fanatics or weirdos. I like to have my parents' respect and approval all the time, but I think they will just make fun of me

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as they make jokes about others. Many of my friends also look upon religion in this manner.

I am afraid that I may lose friends, and since I go to a small school and am only 14, I doubt if I will have much of a chance making new friends at my school.

How can I build up my faith and get closer to God?—J.C.

The most effective witness for Christ, I believe, is the quiet radiance of a life lived in his spirit. I see no reason why you have to come on so strong as to scare away your friends. Your faith will show through the choices you make, the values you put into practice, the attitudes you hold. Moments will come when it seems natural to invite a close friend to join you at church, or to say a quiet word about your commitment to Christ.

Christians have a lot of experience in sustaining faith in an indifferent or hostile world. Talk with your minister about printed resources which can help you in the daily study of the Scriptures and guide you in your prayer life. The regular discipline of worship at church is both a public witness and a source of inspiration and understanding to help your faith grow.



I don't really know what my problem is. You see, I don't feel any kind of emotion at all. Nothing seems real at all. It just seems like a big dream. I know it's hard for anyone to really imagine what I mean. Even my dad couldn't really grasp what I was saying when I told him. When it first started, I only felt it when I was alone, but now, every place I go this awful feeling haunts me. I don't even really know why I'm writing this. It all seems pretty useless.

My second problem is this boy. When I started going with him, it was just sort of to go along with the crowd. I didn't want the other kids to know that I couldn't love, hate, need, want, and so forth. I wanted to be like them because this empty feeling isn't the greatest thing in the world.

After the first couple of weeks going with him I noticed something very different. When I was with him, I really felt like a person. I was real! I could only see him on Saturdays. I grew to look forward to that day because then, for a few hours, life was real. I kept asking

myself why it couldn't be like that all the time. If life really was real then I should be able to feel it every day. But I couldn't. That's what got me so confused. I tried so hard to live every day, but it was no use.

Well, one day I told him I loved him. It scared him, I guess, so he said he didn't want to see me anymore. I've cried every night for over a week now. I don't even know why. This awful emptiness has come back to every minute of my life. The terrible thing is that now I know how great life really could be.

I want to live, Dr. White, I really do. I try to do things to keep busy, and I pray for God to help me every night and day. I know it's terrible to rely on one person so much, but what can I do? I still need him.—D.T.

The feelings you describe of unreality, emptiness, and aloneness are not uncommon among young people today. One researcher has done psychological studies of college freshmen for over 25 years. He sees a rapid increase in the percentage of young people who report feeling numb, alone, unable to react to life. He thinks it has something to do with the grinding pressure to get good grades, to be superintellectual.

At least you know now that you are capable of vivid emotion. You can love, laugh, cry, feel. You need to see, though, that you are not dependent on that one boy. He is not magic. He was simply a good catalyst to bring out your own inner ability. Others can be that kind of catalyst if you have the courage to let them.

Many youth fellowships are spending time in encounter groups and sensitivity training now. Kids can help one another to tune into life, given the right kind of leader to show them how.

Tell Dr. Dole White about your problems, your worries, your accomplishments, and he will respond through Teens. Write to him in care of TOGETHER, P.O. Box 423, Pork Ridge, Ill. 60068. Dr. White, author of Teens since early 1966, has long worked with youth. He earned his doctor of philosophy degree in psychology and ethics from Boston University and is presently serving as a district superintendent in the Southern New England Annual Conference.

—Your Editors

SHARE THE JOY!



YOU CAN'T CON GOD

Tank Harrison, former Memphis cop and Spirit-filled Christian, says just because you go to church and say the right things, it doesn't mean everything is ok. If you truly know and love the Lord, you can't keep quiet about it. Here he shares his personal joy as a Christian living in today's troubled world. Paper, \$1.25

HAIRCUTS AND HOLINESS

Louis Cassels. Designed for study groups or private meditations, this book confronts the questions all Christians have asked themselves at one time or another. Paper, \$1.75

WOMEN IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Georgia Harkness uses a historical survey and a theological analysis to present a descriptive and constructive statement of the status of women today, particularly their role in the churches. Index. \$4.75

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BOOKS

LENT, LIKE ADVENT, calls for a deepening understanding of the celebration we are approaching.

This means reading, and the resources are rich, ranging from the Bible itself, in all of its many versions and editions, to meditations and biographies.

You may want to reread the Gospels with **The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible** (Abingdon, regular edition \$17.50, thumb-indexed edition \$19.50). If you don't have it at home, you may find it in your church library. Or you may like to turn to a new translation of the Gospel of Matthew recently published as a part of **The Anchor Bible**. This new translation of Matthew (Doubleday, \$8) was done by biblical scholars W. F. Albright and C. S. Monn, who also were responsible for the introduction and notes.

New in devotional literature is a paperback book of meditations by United Methodist minister R. Benjamin Garrison on the prayers of St. Francis. **Worldly Holiness** (Abingdon, \$1.95) contains seven meditations based on St. Francis' famous prayer: "Lord, make us instruments of thy peace."

Or you may prefer Malcolm Muggeridge's moving biography of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, whose face shines with the love of Christ and whose life is centered on carrying his message to the world. **Something Beautiful for God** (Horper & Row, \$5.95) is the story of the work she and members of an order which she founded are doing with the poorest of the poor in Calcutta and other Indian towns, in Australia, and Latin America.

"Boulders swelled up from the turf like huge white puffballs, and there was a flash of lightning off to the south that lit for one blue, glistening instant a hundred miles of churning, shifting landscape. I have thought since that each stone, each tree, each ravine and crevice echoing and reechoing with thunder tells us more at such an instant than any daytime vision of the road we travel."

In the same personal vein that has characterized his previous writing Loren Eiseley shares memories of solitary wandering in **The Night Country** (Scribners, \$7.95). In doing so, he tells the story of every human life, and of the race of man itself.

Fascinating reading!

Only history can tell us how effective Lyndon Baines Johnson's presidency was; we are too close to it still. In **The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency 1963-1969** (Holt Rinehart Winston, \$15), however, Mr. Johnson tells us what kind of President he wanted to be.

His hope, he told members of Congress in his last State of the Union address, was "that a hundred years from now it would be said that together we, the Congress and the President, had helped to make our country a place of justice for all its people



"The flash hangs like an immortal magnification in the brain . . ." Artist and Pulitzer Prize winner Leonard Everett Fisher made the woodcuts that introduce each chapter of The Night Country.

and had insured the blessings of liberty for all posterity. That is what I hope. But I believe that, at least, it will be said that we tried."

The Vantage Point is, of course, and quite properly, Lyndon B. Johnson writing for history, his hair combed, his manners and longuage minded, his public image always in front of him. If you want the color, the intensity, and unpredictability of the Johnson style, longer than life and often twice as human, you will have to look elsewhere.

Two other world leaders also tell their stories.

In **Riding the Storm: 1956-1959** (Horper & Row, \$15) former British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan centers on a time when Downing Street was a "not very alluring post." When he entered office, he told the queen, half in joke, half in earnest, that he could not answer for the new government's lasting more than six weeks. He did, however, stay in office more than six years, and Britain remained a world power during his tenure. He is a vivid, interesting writer.

Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, begins **Israel: A Personal History** (Funk & Wagnolls/Sabro, \$20) by tracing the story of the tribe of Abraham since its appearance 4,000 years ago. He goes on to give a behind-the-scenes account of modern Israel from its 1948 struggle for statehood

o the Six-Day War and Israel's stunning victory over Arab forces.

The literature of black liberation is growing every day. Among its most powerful books is *If They Come in the Morning* (Third Press, \$6.95). This is a collection of essays, letters, poetry, and articles by Angela Y. Davis, Ruchell Magee, the Soledad Brothers, and other legionnaires of the revolutionary front. Miss Davis co-operated with Bettina Aptheker and other members of the National United Committee to Free Angela Davis and all Political Prisoners in preparing it.

Angela Davis is being held for trial in California on charges that she supplied the guns used in an abortive prisoner revolt at the Marin County Courthouse in 1970. She maintains that she is innocent, a political prisoner because she has become the symbol of revolution. In defining "political prisoners" the committee goes beyond avowed revolutionaries to include all the poor, friendless, and black who populate the nation's jails and prisons in such overwhelming proportions—people without the money or resources to protest their innocence or point out the part the system has played in crimes they may have committed.

If They Come in the Morning is eloquent, impassioned, and openly Marxist. It is important because it expresses the depth and bitterness of the black liberation movement, the idealism and unwavering purpose of its members, and their abiding love for one another.

The Soledad Brothers were three black inmates of Soledad Prison who were accused of killing a white guard. One of them was George Jackson, recently shot in a San Quentin prison courtyard by guards who testified that he was trying to escape. George Jackson was a gifted writer, and *Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson* (Coward-McCann, \$5.95; Bantam paperback, \$1.50) is already a classic of the protest movement.

In police terminology, a con man is a man who tries to talk you into giving him something for nothing, or misrepresents facts to get what he wants.

Tank Harrison knows all about con men because he is a detective in the Memphis, Tenn., police force. But when he woke up on the morning of November 5, 1966, he didn't know that before he went to bed that night a tremendous change would have taken place in his life. What happened was that he went to a Lay

Fiction



THE TUMULT AND THE JOY by The Gordons (Doubleday, \$6.95)

is a new novel about a minister written by two very dear friends of mine. I remember the professional book reviewer who was asked what he did when he received a book from a friend. His reply was to the point, "Anybody who will not give a friend's book a good review is a louse." Happily for me, my words come not from that philosophy but from a sincere feeling that this is a book every critic and every supporter of the Christian church should read.

The Gordons are a husband and wife team who have impressed me always with their ability to write and be critical and still maintain their marriage. You only have to be in their home to sense the love and respect they hold for each other. They are people who know and love the church. Gordon Gordon has been chairman of the pastor-parish committee of one of our fine congregations. The book is no sweet and sentimental drivel which overlooks the weaknesses of the church. While it reflects the authors' understanding and refers to various Methodist characteristics such as bishops and conferences, the story describes a different kind of polity. The fate of the minister depends upon a committee of seven men.

What The Gordons have done is take the real issues that face a minister and center them in one story, on one man. I doubt seriously that any one preacher has had the continual pressure of David Barkley. He has to deal with a homosexual pastor of youth in his church; his best friend gets a divorce; he counsels with a disturbed young man who, as he suspects, is psychotic; his daughter leaves the fine Jewish boy she has been going with to run around with a hippie and taste new philosophy.

The girl who has leaned on him

through the years and whose parents are members of his church cuts all her connections with them and goes to live with a boy who gives her a venereal disease and then deserts her. A fine young Negro couple arrives from the South, and he helps them find a job and intervenes when the police arrest the young father assuming him to be a bum because he is out of work and has no security. He is confronted by a black revolutionary who shoots up the church. Indeed, everything happens to this preacher.

Too much, it seems to me, is crowded into one life but The Gordons are dealing with real problems that every preacher has dealt with at one time or another. In this respect the book resembles a movie that just gives high points of dramatic interest and wipes out the many days of routine and weary experiences. This treatment makes the movie dramatic and the novel exciting. I point it out so you will not think that every preacher has a life like this every day.

The setting is Los Angeles and every United Methodist there will find it most intriguing. People with an interest in the modern ministry will find it equally exciting and worth reading.

This is not the first book of The Gordons I have reviewed in this column for they have written excellent whodunits. But in this book they have given me an unusual pleasure and great privilege, which is to recommend it to you as a book to give you pleasure and understanding. I am sorry for every man who cannot be a preacher in the church in this time. It is the hardest job in the world, but nothing compares with it for *The Tumult and the Joy* it brings.

—GERALD H. KENNEDY
Bishop, Los Angeles Area
The United Methodist Church

getting along Together

It was one of those Sunday mornings. We just couldn't get everyone organized so we were late getting to church school. As we entered, I noticed the pastor watching us.

"They don't know what the word 'hurry' means," I explained impatiently, nodding in the children's direction.

"Yes," he said, smiling. "Isn't it wonderful!"

—Mrs. Richard E. Blake, Represa, Calif.

On my wedding day many years ago, a very wise lady beckoned me aside and whispered some advice in my ear. "Every now and then," she said, "you should pause and repeat to yourself these words: 'Forget me, remember he.'"

I have done this over the years, and it has helped me find increasing joy in my married life.

It was long after the wedding that I learned this lady had given my husband some wedding-day advice, too: "Forget me, remember she."

—Mrs. Cora Ellen Sobieski
Chicago, Ill.

Our village florist doubles as a volunteer attendant for the town ambulance. One busy day he was called to help take an elderly lady from the hospital to a convalescent home. On the way to the home, the florist whispered instructions to the driver, who turned off the main road and stopped in front of a little white house. There the two men gently raised the stretcher so the delighted passenger could look out—on her own garden of roses. Then they continued on to the home.

—Mrs. Eleanor C. Parsons
Rockport, Mass.

It was often difficult for our five-year-old Tom to learn to live with his two-year-old sister. But we knew that Tom was making progress when we heard him explain to his sister: "Laura, that is your new box of crayons and this is my new box of crayons. I won't play with yours and you must not ever play with mine. That's what we call 'sharing.'"

—R. David Goodell, Peoria, Ill.

Our son, a United Methodist, was entertaining a Catholic friend overnight. When they discovered that both their churches used the Apostles' Creed, they decided to say it together. When they came to "I believe in the Holy . . ." the Catholic boy hesitated, then said, "I believe in the Holy Methodist Church."

—Marlowe D. Potter
Springfield, Minn.

Mrs. B. runs a small convalescent home. Most of her patients are poor, many on welfare, so she treats them to little extras whenever possible.

When anyone has a birthday, she takes her "family" of patients out to dinner. On one such occasion, the group was enjoying the party when a fellow diner approached their table.

"I can see you're having a wonderful time here," he said to Mrs. B. "What's the occasion?" She explained, and he returned to his table.

When Mrs. B. was ready to leave a short time later, she was astonished to learn that she had no bill to pay. The fellow diner, telling the cashier that one good turn deserved another, had paid the entire amount.

—Elizabeth Temple, Medfield, Mass.

My group of third-grade Blue Birds entertaining with Christmas carols at a home for the aged, weren't particularly talented, but had plenty of enthusiasm. They were especially pleased when one elderly gentleman thanked them on behalf of the old folks, praising their beautiful voices.

As the girls left, I thanked him for his kind remarks.

"Pardon?" he asked, turning to watch my lips. It was then I learned that he was totally deaf.

—Mrs. G. R. Papke, Auburn, Wash.

My grade-school son asked how wars began. "Well," I said, "suppose America quarreled with England and . . ."

"But," interrupted my wife, "America mustn't quarrel with England."

"I know," I answered, "but I am taking a hypothetical instance."

"You are misleading the child," she said.

"No, I am not," I replied.

"Yes, you are!"

"I tell you I am not! It's outrageous. . . ."

"All right, Dad," said my son. "Don't get excited. I think I know how wars begin."

—John W. Ames
West Kennebunk, Maine

This notice is displayed in the office of an American businessman here in South Africa:

"This would be a very quiet world if those who had nothing to say—said it."

—The Rev. D. M. Norman,
Durban, South Africa

Short, cheerful—and true—stories are worth \$5 each to you if you will send them to Together, and they are accepted. Sorry, contributions not purchased cannot be returned.—Eds.

Witness Mission at St. Stephen Methodist Church and: "I truly had head-on encounter with Jesus Christ."

Since then he has taken an active part in the lay witness movement, but still, he says: "Every once in a while even now, I catch myself trying to double-talk God. And then I remember that God had loved me all the years before I really knew him in a personal way and accepted me just as I was, and that certainly of a people, I don't have to put on a front with him."

You Can't Con God (Abingdon \$1.25, paper) is his candid account of what has happened to him since his life was turned around.

Who is Middle America? John Wayne? Bob Hope? A 47-year-old housewife in Dayton, Ohio?

Or is it the church? James Armstrong, United Methodist bishop for the Dakotas, thinks it is, and that the religion we have known has been influenced more by cultural and racial considerations than we care to admit.

"If the church is Middle America in microcosm, then it follows that the church is the number one mission field of the church," he says in **Mission: Middle America** (Abingdon, \$3.50). This is a walk through Middle America in company with a churchman who is proud of being Middle American but sees chauvinism as well as patriotism, xenophobia as well as reliance with the eyes of a native.

Bishop Armstrong feels intensely, writes strongly, and has a record of action to back up what he says.

Age talks to youth in **Surviving the Future** (Oxford, \$5.95). Historian Arnold Toynbee was 82 when he had a series of dialogues with his old friend Prof. Kei Wakaizumi before students of Kyoto Sangyo University in Japan. He has condensed those for this slender volume.

Prof. Toynbee pays a great deal of attention to religion. "I do not believe that any human being has ever been without religion or ever can be," he says. He hopes that technology will slow down to be replaced by a new wave of spiritual advance.

He is concerned with all religions, observing that when you look below the surface of Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism, you find that they all are concerned primarily with trying to persuade the human psyche, or soul, to overcome its self-centeredness. And they all teach that egocentricity can be conquered by love.

Like homeowners, mortgage payers, and auto drivers everywhere, most of us on Together's staff are do-

-yourselfers. Even if you don't enjoy
 ling floors, fixing dripping faucets,
 nd refinishing furniture, the cost of
 aving such things done is very con-
 ncing. And every auto driver needs
 o understand enough about his car
 o be able to tell the mechanic what's
 rong.

How to Fix It (McGraw-Hill,
 7.95), by Morton J. Schultz, offers
 id and advice on everything from
 adhesives (choosing the right one for
 ne right job is important) to windows
 hat stick, slip, or bind.

George Miller, who is one of our
 most dedicated do-it-yourselfers, went
 through *How to Fix It* with a practiced
 eye and gave it his enthusiastic rec-
 ommendation: "Schultz does for our
 homes, appliances, and cars what
 poclock did for babies!"

He also said pointedly that *How to
 Fix It* could be a present for Father's
 Day—or Mother's Day either, for
 that matter. Judy Miller, please note.

Whether you've just moved into a
 ouse without a tree or shrub to
 often the bare site or are thinking of
 orrecting some planting mistakes
 ou've already made, there is help in
Gardening and Home Landscaping
 Harper & Row, \$9.95), by Jack
 ramer. This is a complete illustrated
 guide with a supplement to help you
 ecide what plants to select.

On a trout fishing trip in 1946,
 Connecticut businessman John Tarrant
 Kenney discovered that the aban-
 oned factory beside a shining pool
 n the Farmington River was the very
 actory in which Lambert Hitchcock
 ad made the famous Hitchcock
 hairs 100 years before.

Mr. Kenney began tracing the
 Hitchcock story, learned a lot about
 ew England life in the first half of
 ne 19th century, and got so enthusi-
 astic that he decided to reopen the
 actory and make chairs exactly like
 ne original ones.

He tells about it, and about
 Connecticut Yankee L. Hitchcock of
 Hitchcocks-ville, in **The Hitchcock
 Chair** (Potter, \$12.50). It's Americana
 well presented.

A particularly large busybody of a
 hark that was "snubbed" by a
 rench scientist too absorbed in his
 ork to pay attention to him; a moray
 el that allowed a diver to pat its
 ead; a grouper who became such a
 ham" that he had to be locked up
 n an antishark cage when underwater
 otion pictures were being shot that
 e wasn't wanted in—these are some
 f the undersea creatures you meet
 n **Life and Death in a Coral Sea**
 Doubleday, \$8.95). There is plenty of

adventure, too, in this book by
 Jacques-Yves Cousteau with Philippe
 Dirole, and 122 full-color illustrations
 make it remarkably beautiful.

Together's managing editor, Paige
 Carlin, took **The Sesame Street Song
 Book** (Simon and Schuster, \$6.95)
 home overnight and said that he and
 his young daughter, Laurie, both en-
 joyed it. Of course, Laurie knew the
 songs already; she's a devoted
 Sesame Street watcher.

By Joe Raposo and Jeffrey Moss,
 the songbook has good piano ac-
 companiment and chords for guitar or
 autoharp players.

The hardest thing about following
 a recipe is keeping it where you can
 read it without getting it into the
 batter. No problem with **The New
 York Times Easy to Use Large-Type
 Cookbook** (Quadrangle, \$12.50) by
Times home economist Jean Hewitt.
 Its gourmet recipes can be read from
 a distance, and since each is on one
 page or on facing pages you won't
 have to flip a leaf with floury fingers.

Of all the mandarins who guarded
 and guided the king, the seventh was
 the youngest and most simple. He
 loved his king, and the books and
 scrolls of the law. And even more, he
 loved the king's dragon kite, the
 carrier of the king's soul. Then a wild
 wind, like no wind before, wrenched
 it out of his hands and carried it over
 the high stone walls surrounding the
 palace. He followed it and beheld
 for the first time the harsh reality of
 life in the kingdom. The beautiful kite
 was damaged beyond repair, and
 the young mandarin returned with it
 to the palace, knowing that death
 awaited him. Instead, the king sig-
 naled him to stand at his right hand:
 "... for discovering the truth and not
 fearing to reveal it" The walls
 between the palace and the people
 were leveled to the ground, and the
 king rode daily through the kingdom
 from that day on.

All this is a rather sophisticated
 story for young readers, but author
 Jane Yolen tells it well in **The Seventh
 Mandarin** (Seabury, \$4.95). The
 paintings that Chinese-born Ed Young
 did to illustrate it make it an art
 treasure.

—Helen Johnson

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—Dr. J. Harry Haines
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'What in the world is a one-way letter?'

By SANDRA FENICHEL ASHER

MATTHEW'S father was away on a business trip. It was the first time that Matthew and his mother did not go along.

"I miss Daddy already," said Matthew sadly. It was just before dinner. That was when Matthew and his father always played or talked together while Mother cooked. Now, Matthew had to play by himself.

"May I write Daddy a letter?" he asked.

"Daddy will be home in five days," Mother answered, "and a letter might not reach him. He will be traveling from city to city."

Matthew sighed. Five days seemed like an awfully long time. A lot could happen in five days, and Daddy could miss all of it. Suddenly, Matthew had an idea.

"I know what I'll do!" he said excitedly, his eyes glowing. "I'll write a one-way letter!"

"What in the world is a one-way letter?" asked Mother.

"You'll see," said Matthew. He smiled a secret smile and dashed off to his room. Matthew got out his crayons and paints and a big piece of paper.

"Today we went to the supermarket," he thought. Then he painted a picture of the supermarket. He filled the long shelves with cereal boxes and juice bottles. He finished the picture with Mother pushing a shopping cart.

The next day, Matthew and Mother went to Grandma's house. Grandma had baked the chocolate cake Matthew and Grandpa liked best. That evening, while Mother cooked dinner, Matthew painted a picture of Grandpa taking a big bite of chocolate cake.

Mother came to Matthew's door to call him to dinner. "What are you painting?" she asked.

"My one-way letter," said Matthew, quickly hiding the picture under his bed.

"What in the world is a one-way letter?" asked Mother again.

"You'll see," said Matthew, smiling his secret smile.

The third day, he drew Mother ironing Daddy's yellow shirt.

The fourth day, Matthew drew himself building a snowman with his friend, Margo.

The fifth day, he drew Daddy getting on a plane with his brown suitcase.

That night, Daddy came home.

• • •

A MONTH TO GUESS

My first is in **flag** but not in **star**,
My second's in **near** but not in **far**;

My third is in **blue** but not in **red**,
My fourth is in **cradle** but not in **bed**;

My fifth's in **courageous** but not in **bold**,

My sixth is in **warm** but not in **cold**;

My seventh's in **door** but not in **key**,

My eighth is in **honey** but not in **bee**.

My whole is a month of men and hearts,

Of loving notes and cherry tarts.

—Annie Laurie Von Tungen

Answer: February

• • •

"I wrote you a one-way letter," shouted Matthew as his father came in the front door.

"What in the world is a one-way letter?" asked Daddy.

"Guess!" said Matthew.

"Will the mailman bring it?" asked Daddy.

"No," said Matthew, "but he could."

"Did you put it in an envelope?" asked Mother.

"No," said Matthew, "but I could."

"Will I have to answer it?" asked Daddy.

"No!" said Matthew. "It's a one-way letter!"

"We give up," said Mother and Daddy. "What in the world is a one-way letter?"

"Look!" said Matthew. He brought out his five pictures. He had punched a small hole in the corner of each one and tied them together with a red ribbon. He gave them to Daddy.

"Oh, I see!" said Daddy.

"I see, too," said Mother.

Matthew laughed, "A book is a one-way letter!" □



THE WELL-DRESSED KITTY

Kitties have such lovely coats
With long and furry tails,
They've little mittens for their feet
And pockets for their fingernails!

—Elise B. Dunn

Jottings

Does God continue to speak personally to men and women today, either loudly or in that "still small voice" of biblical record?



Throughout history this mystic religious experience has been reported. Sometimes it comes (usually during or after prayer) to comfort or inspire; at other times to suggest or command. When that voice is heard, almost invariably lives are changed.

Such an extraordinary experience has been described to us by Mrs. **Joy B. Lingle** of Iola, Kans., whose poem is printed opposite this page. The poem, let us say, is not the result of her experience; rather, it is a by-product of work into which she has been led.

Mrs. Lingle is a volunteer brailist—that is, she translates reading material into those little raised points that enable the sightless to read by touch.

How did Mrs. Lingle, a young woman with good eyesight, come to devote her time to this cause?

"I needed something in the way of using my tithing time," she says. "In prayer I asked God to show me what I should do. Then came one of the two times in my life when I know

without doubt that God spoke to me.

"Immediately I heard, 'What of yourself do you value most?'"

"'Oh, my eyesight!' I answered aloud.

"'Then learn Braille, and share your eyes with others.'"

At the time, Mrs. Lingle says, "I hardly knew what Braille was."

She began writing letters, inquiring into the subject. She found a book detailing the Braille method, and she mastered the system after 20 months of studying in her spare time.

"Then doors were opened, needs met, and contacts made that were nothing short of miraculous," she says.

Last we heard, Mrs. Lingle was serving as a brailist certified by the Library of Congress. She is a member of state and national Braille associations, and of the Kansas Association for the Blind.

The fun which some city folk seem to have with stories about hicks coming to town is counterbalanced, we've noticed, by the fun country folks have with stories about city folks coming to the country.

We've always thought, however, that country folks are a little more polite and considerate in attempting to conceal their amusement.

All this is borne out by the Rev. **George M. Ricker** of Corpus Christi, Texas [see his *All the Church Does Is Ask for Money*, page 28]. He tells us his first charge was a church in a small rural town.

"Since I was raised in the city, I knew little about farming and rural ways. To get better acquainted, I volunteered to help one of our farmers pull corn. I spent half a day pulling corn and driving a tractor-wagon combination."

Only later did Mr. Ricker learn that he had become the subject of considerable amusement when the farmer reported "that I had called out while driving the tractor, 'What aisle do I go down now?'"

Mr. Ricker adds that the farmer didn't even bat an eye as he directed the young preacher to the right corn row.

It is different when a stranger from another country comes to see us. He is expected to encounter new sights and customs, and generally we are more interested in what he thinks of us than in any amusing predicaments in which he finds himself.

One such visitor was a young German from behind the Berlin Wall who accompanied Dr. Joyce W. Farr and his family on part of their 12,000-mile jaunt across the United

States described in our November 1971, issue [see *Odyssey Across the Church*, page 47].

In the article we told how Hartmuth Henke and Dr. Farr's new son-in-law, Christian Manegald, met in an East German prison; how they became friends; and how Hartmuth served as best man at the wedding of Christian and Margie Farr. We told of Hartmuth in New York City who presumably, he took off for Germany again.

Apparently such was not the case. The other day we received a letter from Mr. Henke who has turned up in India where he is a farm-machine assistant at Uttar Pradesh Agricultural University.

He tells us that visiting the United States was a unique event in his life and that two impressions predominated for one who grew up under a totalitarian regime: The United Methodist Church, and the rugged beauty of America's "Wild West."

"I enjoyed the excellent hospitality, which in my home country is inconceivable," Hartmuth writes. "I could watch a modern Christian Church, which one searches for in vain in East Germany where the scope of the church is more restricted by the government."

He says he was astonished at the endurance and enthusiasm of Dr. Farr, retired after 40 years in the ministry. Each day, Dr. Farr drove the station wagon about 300 miles, conducted two or three interviews, and seldom missed a football or baseball game on the auto radio.

In India, the young German concludes, "I can see daily how badly the people need much money as well as missionary help programs."

Among our contributors: News papermen (and newspaperwomen) turn up frequently in our columns. Latest is **Philip Clark**, editor of the Asheville (N.C.) *Citizen-Times*. He tells us that his article *Gad Also Laughs* [page 32] is "the best illustration I can think of about the most important thing in my life."

By coincidence, almost the same answer comes from **Vera Thomas** of Las Gatos, Calif., whose *Caunt It All Joy* is on page 42. "I can't think of anything," she says, "that could reveal myself as well as the article . . ."

—Your Editors

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GIFT TO THE EYE BANK

Who is she . . .
The sightless child
My imagination pictures?

I dare not ask
Why I came into being
Seeing my world,
And she did not.
The answer belongs to God.

In humility I share my eyes
Through books of Braille,
Knowing one day my gift of love
Will penetrate her eternal night,
And she will behold wonders
Now vaguely promised
By exploring hands.

This, then, is part of the answer!
I am to be blessed
With the joy of giving,
And she with an answered prayer.
—Joy B. Lingle



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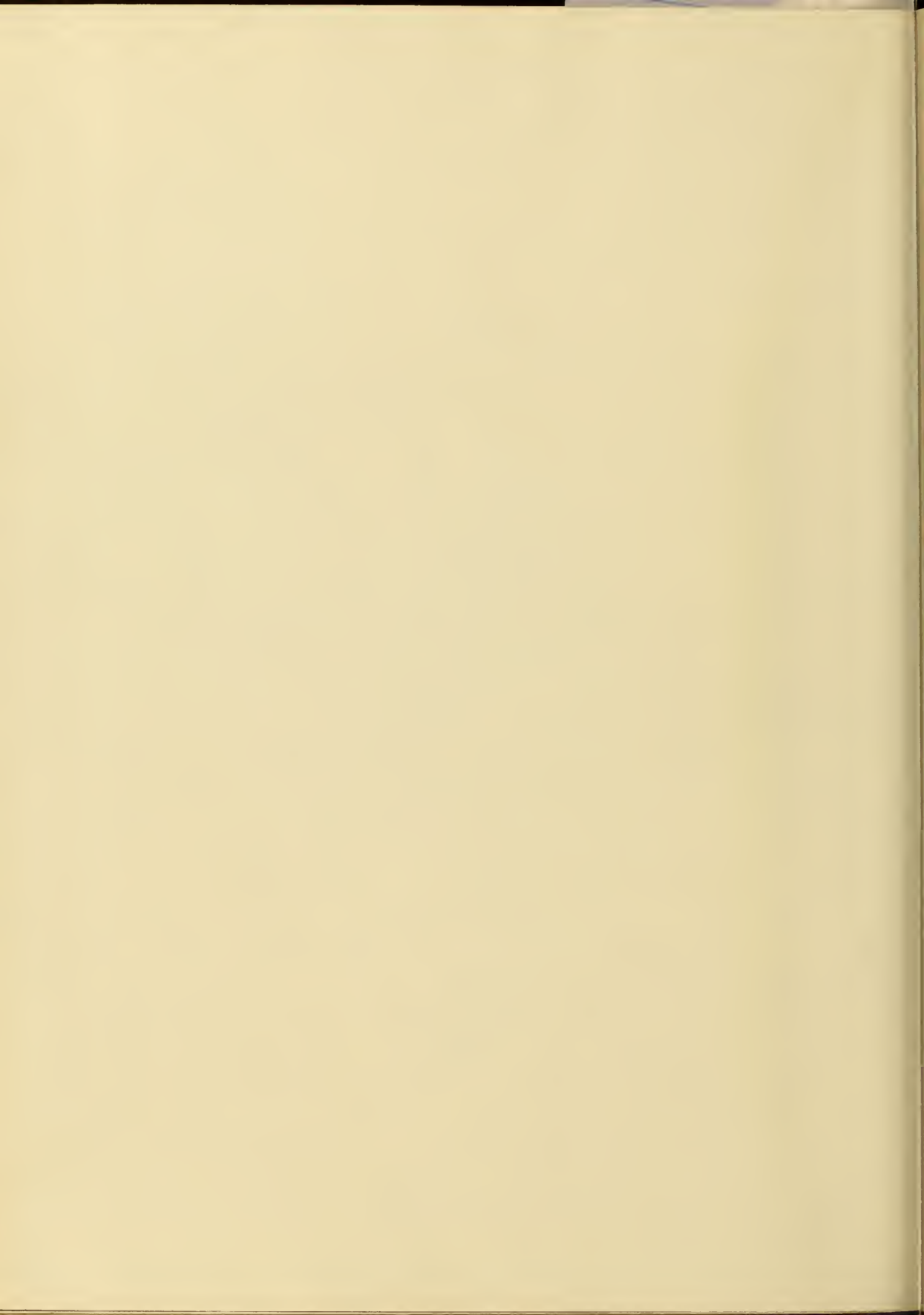
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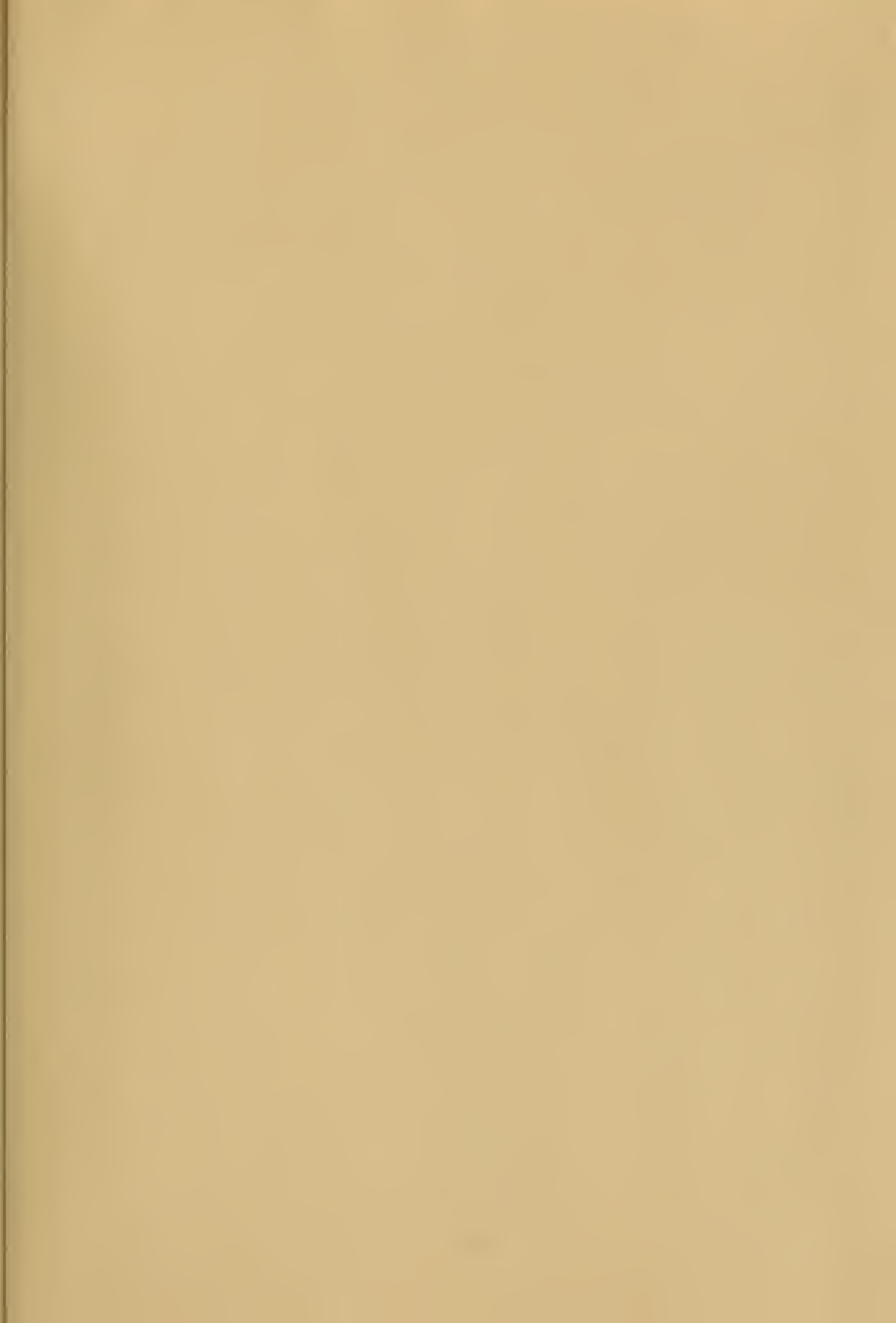
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